

Prosecutor seeks closure of Kurdish party in Turkey

ANKARA (AP) — A top prosecutor on Friday asked the Turkey's highest court to shut down a pro-Kurdish party, accusing it of acting under orders from the command of an outlawed Kurdish rebel organisation. Prosecutor Vural Savas charged that the People's Democracy Party, or HADEP, was operating as a branch of the rebel Kurdish Labour Party, or PKK, which has been fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast. Savas accused the party of inciting separatism based on ethnic differences and providing volunteers for the ranks of the rebel movement. "It has been assessed without any doubt that the branches of HADEP are being used to form the grassroots of the PKK and to organise activities to send militants to the PKK's mountain bands," Savas said.

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King commends Jordan Television

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday telephoned Jordan Television's "Sports Magazine" and expressed his satisfaction of the television station's programming. King Hussein wished all Jordanian athletes further success and achievement.

24 killed in Kosovo village

ROGOVO (AFP) — Twenty-four ethnic Albanians, many of them armed, were killed in this village in western Kosovo on Friday amid fighting with government forces, international observers said. The latest bloodshed came as the six-nation Contact Group set a Feb. 6 deadline for Yugoslavia and Kosovo Albanian leaders to begin talks in France on giving "substantial autonomy" to the Serbian province. Twenty-three bodies, all male, and one adolescent, were seen by an AFP reporter lined up in a graveyard here, waiting to be taken to a morgue. All but four had pistols and grenades on their belts. Five wore uniforms of the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Nine had bullet wounds to the head.

Sicilian police arrest Mafia boss

PALERMO (R) — A fugitive Italian Mafia boss was arrested in his Sicilian hideout on Friday where police said they found him clutching a handgun, and listening to radios aimed to their frequencies. Police said they discovered Salvatore Di Gangi, 57, who has been on the run since 1992, hiding in a luxurious block of flats on one of Sicily's main squares armed with a 357 Magnum handgun. Di Gangi, the fifth most wanted Mafia fugitive, was sentenced in absentia to 14 years in prison by a court for his part in organised crime in the southern Italian coastal city of Agropoli.

U.S. warns citizens on travel to Yemen

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. State Department has warned American citizens against travelling to Yemen following recent high-profile incidents involving foreigners. "The level of risk for foreigners in Yemen is very high," it said in a statement, noting that four tourists had been killed after being kidnapped in a clash with between their abductors and security forces. It added that trials for suspects in the kidnapping case as well as in a case involving a plot to bomb Western targets in the country were now underway. In addition, the statement said that "other anti-Western terrorists are still at large" in Yemen.

Gore warns Primakov over Iran

DAVOS (AFP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore warned Russian Premier Yevgeny Primakov on Friday that Washington could reconsider cooperative space industry cooperation if Moscow fails to stop nuclear technology sales to Iran, diplomats said. During a 90-minute meeting in Davos, Switzerland, Gore reiterated a U.S. warning that Washington is prepared to link the sale of missile technology to the issue of satellite launch business worth \$1 billion a year for the Russians.

Court in Basque country bombed

BILBAO (AFP) — Two masked attackers hurled Molotov cocktails at a court in Spain's northern Basque region on Friday, police said. The assailants made their lunch-time attack with petrol bombs before fleeing. The fire was quickly put out with an extinguisher and only minor damage was reported. The court in Llodio, in the Basque province of Alava, was also firebombed in 1994. Similar attacks, generally blamed on young radical separatists linked to the ETA Basque militants, have multiplied in the region in recent weeks, despite an ETA ceasefire.

Prince Abdullah opens Arab interior ministers conference Jordan to intensify cooperation with Arab states to fight terrorism, drugs — Regent

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on Friday reiterated Jordan's firm stand against terrorism and drug trafficking, saying the Kingdom intends to intensify cooperation with Arab states to combat both problems.

Addressing the opening session of the Conference of Arab Interior Ministers, the Regent said: "The session [of Arab ministers] here in Amman comes at the proper time to discuss important issues that have direct impact on the lives of people, especially terrorism and drug abuse."

In his first public address since his appointment as heir to the Throne, Prince Abdullah stressed that His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly stated that terrorism has no religious or political boundaries.

"We in Jordan are following the problem of terrorism with keen interest," the Regent said, adding that the Kingdom's participation in the 1998 anti-terrorism conference in Egypt was part of this effort.

The conference, held in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm Al Sheikh, drew dozens of Arab and foreign dignitaries together to discuss measures to fight terrorism in the Middle East.

Prince Abdullah conveyed King Hussein's good wishes

for a successful meeting as the King himself is particularly keen to "secure comprehensive peace and security" for the region.

"Despite His Majesty's current health condition, he looks at your meeting with all interest, and I pray to Almighty God that he will return home safely," the Prince told the participants at the three-day meeting.

Saudi Interior Minister Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz, who is also the honorary chairman of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, said the council has had many achievements in the past few years, especially in the areas of combating terrorism and drug trafficking.

Among these, he said, were the Arab Strategy to Combat Terrorism, which was agreed upon during the council's previous meeting in Tunisia in 1998 with the ratification of seven Arab countries, as well as another plan to fight drug abuse in the Middle East.

The interior ministers are scheduled to discuss the annual report on the "security plan" and a plan to educate the Arab public on how to help to combat crime in the Middle East.

A report about efforts to fight terrorism in the region, prepared by the council's secretariat, described Israel as "one of the major sources of terrorism in the region."

"While it claims that it is a base of democracy, freedom and liberty, it [Israel] uses the



HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, meets with Saudi Interior Minister Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz following his arrival in Amman (Photo by Yousef Allan)

platform of fighting terrorism to ensure its targets of expansion into the Arab World," the report said.

"Israel is seeking to damage the reputation of Arab citizens by misguiding world public opinion that Arabs are behind acts of terrorism, sabotage and violence," the five-page report said.

Last year, Arab justice and interior ministers reached an agreement to fight terrorism. The agreement differentiated

between terrorism and the right of peoples to struggle in all forms to liberate their lands in line with U.N. principles and international law.

In the final communiqué of the April 1998 meeting, Arab interior ministers lashed out at terrorism in all "its forms" and called for enhancing security and judicial cooperation among Arab states, "including the hand-over of those involved in these acts."

At least 22 ministers, 18 of

them interior ministers, are taking part in the current conference, which will end on Sunday.

Among those visiting Jordan for the first time were Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Sabah of Kuwait, Michel Murr of Lebanon and Mohammad Harbah of Syria. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Fuyez Tarawneh on Friday held a lunch banquet honouring the Arab delegates to the conference.

King starts new treatment session at Mayo Clinic

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has started a new chemotherapy session at the Mayo Clinic and his condition is stable, Jordan's ambassador to the U.S. told the Jordan Times on Friday.

"The King is presently undergoing treatment for about 10 days that includes chemotherapy, and the doctors are trying to have him go through that course in order to attempt a more successful remission," Marwan Muasher said.

King Hussein underwent six months of treatment at the Rochester, Minnesota clinic for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. He returned to cheering crowds in Amman on Jan. 19, but his doctors' concerns over a recurrent fever and blood count abnormalities forced him to return last Tuesday to the U.S. for further medical attention.

"His Majesty is fully aware of everything, and his morale is very high," Muasher told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview on Friday from the Mayo Clinic.

"The King is in constant touch with HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, and he is giving his instructions," Muasher added.

The ambassador said King Hussein is up and around, visiting with relatives and watching Jordan Television.

The Associated Press quoted Her Majesty Queen

Noor's press secretary Nadine Shubailat on Friday as saying that the King has even found time for recreation, including playing board games.

"He is up and walking around. His mood is high," Shubailat said.

Some sources, however, said they expected that King Hussein might need to undergo a second stem cell transplant.

"We have to wait and see what will be the final results after concluding the 10-day chemotherapy," said one informed source.

"If the doctors at the Mayo Clinic decide that King Hussein needs an operation, it will not be a problem because the marrow cells are available," the source added.

The King received a stem cell transplant following six courses of chemotherapy which began last July. The 63-year-old monarch announced at the end of that treatment that he had fully recovered. But when symptoms of fever and blood count abnormalities were indicated last week, his physicians said they were taking no chances and recommended that he return to the clinic.

The King's health has been headline news on major global media organisation broadcasts and the press since leaving Jordan on Tuesday.

(Continued on page 2)

Regent meets with Albright, Saudi defence minister U.S., Saudi Arabia express continued support for Jordan

By Francesca Ciriaci with agencies

AMMAN — Major world and regional players, including the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Israel, reiterated their support for Jordan this weekend.

Washington reaffirmed its full backing to the Kingdom in all fields and pledged continued economic and military assistance to the Kingdom during a visit here on Thursday by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

After talks with HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, at Raghadan Palace, Albright pledged that the U.S. was looking into ways to support Jordan's economy further and more effectively.

Albright, whose unscheduled stop in Amman followed talks on Iraq in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, said she "wanted to stop here in order to make very clear that the U.S. stands with Jordan."

"I wanted to stop in Amman to congratulate His Highness Prince Abdullah on his new assignment and to hold discussions with him," she added.

Albright said her country was looking forward to the recovery of His Majesty King Hussein, who flew urgently to the U.S.

last week and is now undergoing more chemotherapy treatment at the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, Minnesota.

The U.S. official conveyed to Prince Abdullah a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton, congratulating him on his recent designation as Crown Prince.

In the message, President Clinton expressed the U.S. administration's satisfaction with the way the designation of Prince Abdullah as Crown Prince was handled, saying the development reflected Jordan's institutionalisation and stability.

Reporters accompanying Albright said U.S. officials in her delegation had stressed that Washington was regarding Amman as "the oasis of stability" it had always been and dismissed outright speculation on any domestic or foreign policy changes.

They also said U.S. officials had told them that Prince Abdullah was well-known to the administration and was a frequent visitor to the Pentagon and other agencies.

"He is not an unknown quantity. His is a frequent visitor to the Pentagon," one U.S. official was quoted as saying. "I expect continuity. If you see Abdullah, you will see a chip off the old

block."

Despite the brevity of her visit here, Albright said she and Prince Abdullah held "lengthy" talks about Iraq, but did not elaborate.

"Our policy continues to be the same: to contain Saddam and work towards a regime change there," Albright told reporters.

Jordan has always stood firmly in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, but it has also said it wished the Iraqi people could enjoy the freedoms, stability, and democracy they deserve.

Albright said the U.S., which is scheduled to provide Jordan with \$341 million in economic and military assistance through 1999, was looking into ways to transfer aid sooner.

"We're looking into a variety of ways of dealing with some of the economic subjects... We have placed some money into a supplementary package, called the Wye supplemental. We want to see how whether there is some way to move that money in a more rapid fashion and also generally how to be more supportive economically," Albright said.

As she was speaking here, U.S. officials in Asaba were handing over \$25 million worth

of military equipment, the final tranche of Jordan's 1998 military aid package (see story on page 3).

Albright announced in her last visit to Jordan in December an additional \$200 million package of "security aid" which diplomats say will take the form of a drawdown of used U.S. military equipment to be granted to Jordan in coming years.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz also paid a visit to Prince Abdullah on Thursday to congratulate him on behalf of King Fahd.

"Jordan is the apple of the eye of the Arab World, and safeguarding it means we are safeguarding the sight of the whole nation," said Prince Sultan, who is also deputy prime minister. "Hence, we care about Jordan, and the nation deserves our appreciation."

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned Prince Abdullah on Friday "to congratulate him on his appointment and to pass on best wishes for the recovery of his father," an Israeli official statement said.

For Israel, "peace with Jordan is a major imperative," it added.



Palestinian mourners carry the coffin of Zaki Obeid on Friday during his funeral procession in Arab east Jerusalem. Obeid was shot on Jan. 26 by an Israeli border guard during clashes in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issaweyah and was in a coma for two days before being declared dead officially Jan. 28 (AFP photo)

Clashes after funeral of slain Palestinian

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Some 100 stone-throwing Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli troops firing rubber-coated steel bullets on Friday, witnesses said, after the funeral of a man who was shot dead by a policeman. Hundreds of Palestinians attended the funeral of Zaki Obeid, 28, which passed off peacefully in the Arab east Jerusalem of neighbourhood of

Issaweyah, but 100 youths stayed behind to throw stones and Molotov cocktails at police, witnesses said. Several of the Palestinians were injured in the clashes, which were ongoing at sunset, but none of them was seriously hurt and none was taken to hospital, the witnesses said. Obeid was pronounced dead on Thursday at Jerusalem's Hadassah Ein

Kerem Hospital, where he had been in a coma since being shot during a protest on Tuesday by around 100 people demonstrating against the demolition of a Palestinian home in Issaweyah. The policeman who killed Obeid faces charges of causing death through negligence for firing a rubber-sheathed bullet at the Palestinian from too close a range.

Plea bargain reached in case of Israeli 'spies' in Cyprus

LARNACA (AP) — Two Israelis charged with spying on Cyprus pleaded guilty to lesser charges Friday when the prosecution dropped the main charges of conspiracy and espionage in an apparent plea bargain deal.

The defendants, Udi Hargov and Igal Damary, changed their plea to guilty on a charge of possession of illegal telecommunications equipment and entered the same plea to a

new charge of approaching a restricted area.

The first charge carries a maximum sentence of one year in prison and the second a maximum sentence of six years. Under the dropped charges, each could have gotten up to 10 years imprisonment.

Judge George Arisist scheduled sentencing for Monday. It seemed unlikely the two would get the maximum sentences since the dropping

of the major charges and the pleas to lesser ones seemed part of a deal.

The defendants, in jackets and ties, appeared unusually cheerful from the time they were brought in court in the coastal town of Larnaca.

Two Israeli lawyers who have been assisting the Cypriot defence team in the case and Israeli embassy representatives also appeared to be upbeat, exchanging smiles and nods during the 35-minute proceedings.

Hargov and Damary were arrested Nov. 6 at the small fishing village of Zigi on the Cypriot southern coast. The village is near military installations, including an army commando training camp. During an earlier visit to Cyprus in October, Cypriot military exercises with Greece were underway at nearby areas.

Newspapers reported that they made calls to a number in Tel Aviv that was believed to be Israel's

Mossad spy agency.

When the two were arrested, Cyprus was expecting to receive a Russian air defence system, and Turkey had vowed to block deployment of the missile system, which has since been cancelled.

Their case strained relations with Israel, whose growing military cooperation with Turkey has become a source of serious concern to Cyprus, more than a third of

which is occupied by Turkish troops.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 after a brief coup by Greek Cypriots seeking to unite the island with Greece. Turkey has since kept an estimated 35,000 troops in a break-away state declared by Turkish Cypriots in 1983.

(Continued on page 2)

Crown Prince Abdullah celebrates 37th birthday today



By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, celebrates his 37th birthday today with cables of support to the new Hashemite heir to the Throne continuing to pour in from Arab and Western leaders.

"The one Jordanian family will celebrate His Highness' birthday amid sentiments of love and pledges of allegiance to Prince Abdullah and to the Hashemite Throne," the state-run news agency Petra said on Friday.

His Majesty King Hussein designated Prince Abdullah as heir to the Throne on Monday, replacing his younger brother, HRH Prince Hassan, who had been Crown Prince for 34 years.

Prince Abdullah, who heads the army's elite Special Forces Command,

took over as Regent on Tuesday after King Hussein was rushed back to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, suffering from recurring fever and low blood count.

Jordanian officials said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was expected to visit Jordan on Saturday to call on Prince Abdullah to congratulate him on his appointment before embarking on a key trip to Europe and the United States.

In a cable he sent on Wednesday, Arafat expressed his support for the Crown Prince and stressed the "good relations between the Palestinian and Jordanian leaderships" and the "excellent relations between the two nations."

He also expressed his gratitude to King Hussein for his support for the peace process and the aspirations of the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, local newspapers on Friday hailed weekend visits to Jordan by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, also a deputy prime minister. (See story, page 1)

Albright, who handed the Crown Prince a letter of support from U.S. President Bill Clinton, emerged from the 30-minute meeting to reiterate U.S. support for the King's choice.

"I have wanted very much to stop here in Amman to congratulate Prince Abdullah on his new assignment," she said, adding that the visit was aimed to show that "the U.S. stands by Jordan."

The Saudi guest, who said he was instructed by King Fahd to wish Prince Abdullah good luck, was met at the airport by the Regent and other Royal family members.

"Jordan is the apple of the Arab World's eye, and by safeguarding Jordan, we are safeguarding the sight of the whole [Arab] nation," Prince Sultan told reporters. "Hence, we care about Jordan, and the nation deserves our appreciation."

Ties between neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Jordan were strained during the 1990-1991 crisis Gulf triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but they have warmed over the past three years.

On Wednesday, Bahrain's Crown Prince Sheikh Salman Ben Hamad made a brief stopover in Amman to meet Prince Abdullah, who has developed strong ties with several Gulf Arab leaders during his army tenure.

Sheikh Sultan Ben Mohammed, ruler of the

Arab Emirate of Sharjah, China's Deputy President Jin Tao, Morocco's Crown Prince Mohammed, Israeli President Ezer Weizman and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon also sent the Crown Prince congratulatory messages.

Meanwhile, hundreds of well-wishers from across the country continued to arrive at Raghdan Palace on Thursday to pledge allegiance to Prince Abdullah.

Many offered him copies of the Holy Koran and recited poetry during the reception, held for a second day because of the crowds wanting to greet him.

Prince Abdullah, standing in the elaborate throne chamber, shook hands and kissed bedouin tribesmen, many of who recited verses expressing "allegiance" to the "Hashemite Throne of Hussein and Abdullah."

The well-wishers, of all ages, included leaders of the influential Islamic Action Front and the Muslim Brotherhood, women activists, businessmen, traders, unionists, Christian clergy and women members of local tribes.

For a fourth day, newspapers were awash with congratulatory ads, many of them full-page, displaying pictures of King Hussein and Prince Abdullah.

The ads, adorned with national flags and the crown, were accompanied by poems, warm wishes and expressions of "unequivocal loyalty" for the Hashemites.

Prince Abdullah, who holds the rank of major general in the Jordan Armed Forces, is King Hussein's eldest son by his second wife, HRH Princess Muna.

Born in Amman in 1962, the Prince started his edu-

cation at the Islamic Educational College, left for England in 1966 and entered St. Edmund's School in Surrey, then later attended Deerfield Academy in the United States where he completed his high school education.

In 1980, Prince Abdullah joined Britain's Royal Academy at Sandhurst, where he received his military education.

He joined Oxford University for a year, graduating in 1984 in special studies in international politics and world affairs. On returning home in 1984, Prince Abdullah, then a first lieutenant, served as Platoon Commander and Company 2nd-in-command in the 40th Armoured Brigade. His military service was interrupted three times to attend the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where he was in residence as a mid-career fellow, to attend the All Arms Tactics Course at the British School of Infantry, and the Command and Staff College, Camberley, in the United Kingdom.

As commander of the Special Forces Command, Prince Abdullah led an operation to rout gunmen from their hideout following the high profile murder of eight people at a home in a West Amman suburb in 1998.

While the Prince's interests have focused on the military — where he is highly respected and supported — he has also acted as Regent in the absence of King Hussein and other family members, and has several times been assigned by the King to represent Jordan on foreign missions.

Prince Abdullah enjoys



A FULL AGENDA: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, had a full weekend agenda, meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (top) and with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz (below) (photos by Petra)

car racing like his father, as well as water sports and collecting ancient weapons and armaments. He is president of the National Football Federation, honorary president of the Interna-

tional Tourism Golden Rudder Society, and heads the National Committee for Tourist and Archaeological Films Production. In June 1993, Prince Abdullah married Her

Royal Highness Princess Rania. The couple have one son, HRH Prince Hussein, born June 28, 1994, and one daughter, HRH Princess Iman, born Sept. 27, 1996.



AQABA: His Royal Highness Prince Faisal attends a ceremony to receive the last tranche of American military aid (Petra photo)

Jordan receives last tranche of \$76.6 million military aid package

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan received a delivery of \$25 million worth of military equipment from the U.S. Thursday, the final tranche of \$76.6 million military aid allocated to the Kingdom for the 1998 fiscal year.

His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, who attended the ceremony, praised the ties between Jordan and the U.S., describing them as based on mutual confidence and deep respect.

Prince Faisal expressed Jordan's deep appreciation of the U.S. aid which he said will further boost the Kingdom's defence capabilities.

The equipment was provided under a "military drawdown" programme, in

line with the President Bill Clinton's pledge to assist the Kingdom.

Colonel Jack Dees, chief of the military assistance programme in Jordan, said the equipment includes 18 M901 improved tube launchers optically wire-guided (TOW) missile vehicles, ammunition and spare parts for a variety of Jordan Armed Forces vehicles and aircraft.

Prince Faisal inspected the military equipment and was briefed by the military on their use and importance.

In January of last year, Jordan received helicopter spare parts, 38 M60 A3 tanks, 18 Howitzer cannons, \$6 million worth of ammunition and military personnel carriers worth a

total of \$100 million. In 1996, Jordan received the first one-third of U.S. military drawdown assistance, valued also at \$100 million. Additionally, the Kingdom received \$200 million worth of 16 F-16 jet fighters that year.

This year, President Clinton said he plans to request Congressional budget authorisation for a total of \$425 million in military assistance to Jordan over three years.

The delivery of the military equipment coincided with a brief visit to Jordan on Thursday by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who arrived to express America's support for Jordan and to congratulate His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on his appointment last week as crown prince.

The U.S. has already significantly increased economic aid to Jordan in the last three years to support the national economy. Economic aid now runs at \$150 million a year, up from just \$7 million in 1996.

Viagra hits Jordanian market, pharmacies report low demand

AMMAN (J.T.) — The headline-making impotency drug Viagra is now available at pharmacies in Jordan, but can only be obtained with a doctor's prescription, according to the Health Ministry.

A report in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Friday said that Jordanian pharmacies started selling the drug legally as of Thursday, although the drug has been sold illegally for months at inflated prices.

The report quoted the Department of Pharmaceutical and Laboratory Control at the Ministry of Health announcing the arrival of the first shipment of the Viagra drug from the U.S. The department emphasised the ministry's strict rules that the drug can only be sold to the public through a doctor's prescription.

According to Mohammad Sabbagh, general manager

of Sabbagh Drug Company, the local agent for the American manufacturer of Viagra, his company submitted a request to register the drug in Jordan nearly seven months ago.

He said Viagra will be sold in a four-pill pack for JD36, noting that the price in Jordan will be the same as the international prices, although its official price in the U.S. is \$10 a pill.

A report in Al Dustour Friday quoted Muisaa Al Saket, head of the pharmaceutical department at the Health Ministry as saying that the decision to sell the drug came after recommendations from the ministry's technical committee. The committee will monitor the sale of the drug to ensure that it is only sold if prescribed by a doctor.

She said the ministry will also take measures to prevent the smuggling of the

drug into the Kingdom, warning that any drug store selling smuggled Viagra pills will be subject to legal procedures.

The report quoted a number of pharmacy owners as saying that demand on the Viagra pill on the first day was poor, but they emphasised that they will strictly abide by the Ministry of Health's control regulations.

Viagra, which started selling in the U.S. and a number of Western countries over a year ago, should be dispensed under strict medical control to ensure that no harm is inflicted on consumers and that consumers are not subject to side effects of the drug.

Officials believe that the sale of Viagra in Jordan could further boost the Kingdom's birth rate, which currently stands at 3.4 per cent, one of the highest in the world.

News in Brief

Regent receives cable from Tunisia

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, Friday received a congratulatory cable from Tunisian President Zain Al Abedin Ben Ali on the occasion of his designation as heir to the throne. In his message, Ben Ali wished good luck and success to the Regent and progress and prosperity to the Jordanian people.

Arafat receives Majali in Gaza

GAZA (Petra) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Friday received head of the Jordanian representation office Ziyad Majali and inquired about His Majesty King Hussein's health. He also sent a cable to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the Regent, congratulating him on his new post. Majali announced that President Arafat will pay a visit to the Kingdom today Saturday to meet with Prince Abdullah and senior Jordanian officials.

King confers medal on Fairouz

AMMAN (Petra) — Upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on Friday conferred upon the Lebanese singer, Fairouz, the Al Hussein Medal for Distinguished Performance in appreciation of her efforts to upgrade Arab music and singing. Fairouz performed two concerts in the Kingdom on Thursday and Friday evening, for the first time in 16 years, at Amman Private University auditorium. The Lebanese diva came upon an invitation from the university and Al Faisali Youth Club.

Cold weather is on the way

AMMAN (J.T.) — The weekend's rainfall came out only with around 250,000-300,000 cubic metres of water, an official said Friday. Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department said this week's weather will be relatively cold at night, with partly cloudy and moderate temperatures during the day. No rain is expected.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Film

• "The Godfather" (pts. I and II) will be screened on Sunday and Monday respectively.

Exhibitions

• Works by Mohammad Al Saifi at Books@Café, Jabal Amman, until Feb. 13 (Tel. 4650457).

• Works by Victor Vasarely at the exhibition hall of the Ministry of Culture, until Feb. 8.

• "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932) until Feb. 1.

• The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Dana Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Feb. 25.

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U.S. general questions support for Iraqi opposition groups

WASHINGTON (R) — The top U.S. commander in the Gulf on Thursday questioned American plans to support opposition groups in Iraq, saying none of the existing groups presented a viable threat to President Saddam Hussein.

"I don't see an opposition group that has the viability to overthrow Saddam at this point," Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni told a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, whose members strongly advocated building up the resistance groups.

Zinni's comments followed signs of deep wariness in the Clinton administration toward putting too much faith in the opposition groups, which never have seriously challenged Saddam because of an inability to unite or to organize effectively inside Iraq.

Backing for the groups has been urged strongly by Congress and was a key element in a shift in U.S. policy announced by President Bill Clinton to combine short-term containment with the declared long-term goal of a new government in Baghdad.

Zinni, addressing many of the senators who helped drive the Iraqi Liberation Act that

incorporated military and financial backing for the opposition, said: "I think it would be very difficult and, if not done properly, would be very dangerous."

Zinni, commander-in-chief of U.S. forces Central Command overseeing the volatile swathe of countries in the Middle East and South Asia, said his priority was stability in the oil-rich Gulf region, torn by war for much of the last two decades.

"It is possible to create a situation that would be worse [than at present]," he said, warning of the effect if Saddam's autocratic government fell amid a struggle between dozens of ethnic, religious and political groups competing for power.

Following the terms of the 1998 law, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright earlier this month named seven groups that qualify for U.S. backing, but senior U.S. officials have shown very differing levels of enthusiasm.

On Tuesday, Clinton's National Security Adviser Sandy Berger appeared unconvinced, telling reporters: "We have not made a decision to use... funds" mandated by Congress.

Berger said it was necessary first to discuss this with regional allies, many of which have expressed concern over the possible chaos should Saddam's authoritarian rule collapse.

He stressed that direct backing for the opposition, which includes two big Kurdish groups in northern Iraq as well as the Iraqi National Congress led by exiles, is only part of a wider strategy to create an alternative voice for the Iraqi people.

Speaking at the State Department, spokesman James Foley expressed full support for the act, which was endorsed by Clinton and carries powerful weight from Congress, but stressed that the effort to replace Saddam was a long-term project.

"We have no illusions, and I think based on past experience, we've made it clear that we don't want to rush into any kind of solutions that might end up becoming counterproductive and leading to the loss of the lives of those who are seeking to promote change in Iraq," Foley said.

Democrats joined majority Republicans on the Senate committee in calling for a more robust policy to work for

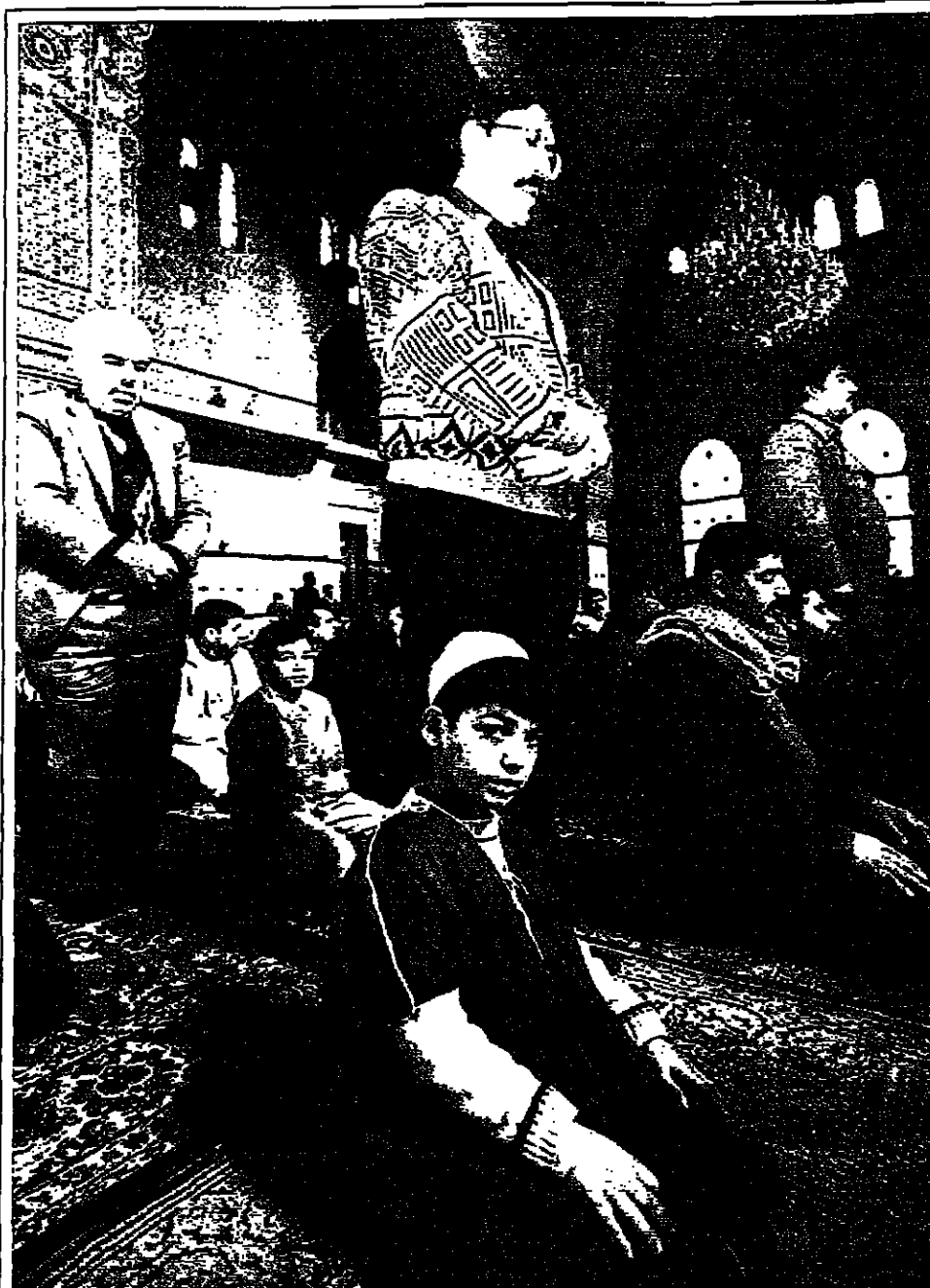
Saddam's ouster, including supplying military equipment to those opposition groups that show they can use it against Saddam.

Democratic Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, describing Saddam as "a time bomb which could explode," said: "A lot of us feel that the risk of moving him out of power is less than the risk of keeping him in power."

Several senators urged a more aggressive military approach to stop the series of almost-daily, cat-and-mouse engagements in the northern and southern no-fly zones in which U.S. planes attack ground defences in response to Iraqi threats.

Zinni said despite an extension of so-called "rules of engagement" allowing U.S. planes to hit any element of Iraq's air defence system in response to a threat, the rules were still restricted to targets inside the no-fly zones.

To pursue Iraqi MiG warplanes that violate the zones and attack them at their heavily-defended bases, as urged by Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain at the hearing, would put pilots at high risk from missiles and entail a build-up of U.S. forces, Zinni said.



FRIDAY PRAYERS IN BAGHDAD: An Iraqi boy prays Friday at Abdul Khader Al Gelani Mosque in Baghdad. Iraq and Saudi Arabia escalated a war of words with murderous and insults flying in the official media of both countries. Sheikh Abdul Razak Al Saadi said in his sermon "those who claim that they are Arabs and Muslims are shaking hands with aggressors" in a reference to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (AFP photo)

Sahhaf calls for renewed Arab dialogue

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Foreign Minister Mohanad Saeid Al Sahhaf called today for a renewed Arab dialogue even though Baghdad still snarled from its failure to win the backing of an Arab League conference.

"We believe there are opportunities to unite in efforts... this is vital especially for Arab countries which do not follow the Kuwaiti-Saudi orbit and their venom," Sahhaf told Iraqi satellite television.

"We will try to find frank and sincere ways to push even those who are standing against such a dialogue," he said, according to an unofficial translation of the interview.

Sahhaf stormed out of Sunday's Arab foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo in protest at their failure to condemn December's U.S.-led missile bombardments on Iraq or to support Baghdad's call for a unilateral lifting of U.N. sanctions.

On Thursday, he reiterated allegations that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had pressurized other Arab League members into joining the "ugly game" by producing a final statement that was in line with U.S. demands and provided a "cover" for U.S. attacks this week on no-fly zones in Iraq.

'Mordechai has no chance in PM race'

TEL AVIV (R) — Sacked Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who announced his candidacy for prime minister this week, has no chance in defeating Benjamin Netanyahu in re-election in May, opinion polls showed on Friday.

According to two polls published in Israeli newspapers, Mordechai's dramatic announcement did not change earlier forecasts for the run-off vote in which Netanyahu would face Labour Party leader Ehud Barak in a tight race.

The poll of 550 people found Netanyahu winning 36 per cent, Barak 35 per cent and Mordechai 22 per cent in the first round. In a second round contest between the two top vote-getters, Barak would defeat Netanyahu 48 per cent to 46 per cent.

The poll had a 4.5 per cent margin of error. In a separate Dahaf poll published in the daily Yedioth Ahronoth, Netanyahu and Barak also moved into the second round with Barak edging out Netanyahu 45 per cent to 42 per cent. Dahaf canvassed 506 people and had a four per cent margin of error.

Czech intelligence chief's sudden dismissal shrouded in mystery

PRAGUE (AP) — Reports that the abrupt firing of the country's intelligence chief was linked to planned terrorist activities of the former Iraqi consul general to Prague were met with silence Friday from the Czech government.

The government announced Thursday that it had fired Karel Vultek, head of the Czech intelligence service known as BIS, for a "serious professional failure."

The reason for Vultek's dismissal late Wednesday remained secret, but some media attributed his firing to plans to blow up the office of U.S.-financed Radio Free Iraq in Prague.

Others attributed his firing resulted to inexperience and lack

of professionalism.

According to Czech Television reports, Vultek failed to inform the government that former Iraqi consul general to Prague, Jaber Salim, had been instructed to arrange for the bombing of Radio Free Iraq's offices on Wenceslas Square.

No bombing was carried out, and Salim defected to London late last year.

"I am sorry that we had to learn [about the professional failure] from friendly powers," Deputy Premier Pavel Rychetsky told Czech Television on Thursday, refusing to be more specific.

"Every government in the world would do the same and not reveal reasons for it,"

Rychetsky said.

Media reported that British intelligence officers had learned of the bombing plot.

However, the daily Mlada fronta Dnes reported Friday that Vultek was fired for failing to recruit Salim and secure his cooperation with European and U.S. officials.

No one at the Iraqi Embassy could be reached Friday morning for comment.

Jan Klas, the opposition deputy who heads the parliamentarian committee that oversees the BIS, contended the move was long planned.

"I have noticed pressure on the [BIS] director for several weeks," Klas told the Pravo daily.

Misha'al says Israel still trying to kill him

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior official in the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) accused Israel on Friday of continuing to try to assassinate him after he survived an attempt on his life in September 1997.

"I have received a number of messages confirming Israel's intention to try again [to assassinate me]," Khaled Misha'al, the head of Hamas' political bureau, said in an interview with the Cairo weekly Al-Ahram Al Arabi.

"I was told by Palestinian intelligence sources that Israel was determined to make another attempt," said the Amman-based Hamas leader.

"I'm not scared of death but this does not stop me from taking precautions," he said. Misha'al survived an attempt by agents of Israel's intelligence service Mossad to kill him in Amman in September 1997.

The botched attempt severely strained Israel's relations with Jordan and forced the

Jewish state to release Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, after eight years in its jails in order to secure the return of the two Mossad agents responsible.

In the interview Misha'al also said that Hamas was keen to renew dialogue with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and challenged the PNA to enter into talks "based on justice and respect for the ultimate interests of Palestinians."

If the PNA signals its will-

ingness to enter into talks, Hamas, which opposes the peace process with Israel, will work "to prevent any Israeli 'U.S. pressure' on the PNA," Misha'al said.

Hamas' military wing, Izzeddine Al Qassab Brigades, which is usually thought to operate at arm's length from the political structure, has been responsible for a series of suicide bombings which have killed dozens of Israelis and wounded hundreds more.

Plea bargain reached in case of Israeli 'spies'

(Continued from page 1)

Hargov, 37, and Danary, 49, have been held in the capital Nicosia 40 kilometres to the northwest, since their arrest. Their trial opened Jan. 20.

Prosecutor George Papaioannou explained the dramatic outcome of Friday's hearing by saying there were problems with the main charges against the men.

"You see some difficulties and you have to take a decision," he told reporters.

"We could not see the out-

come of the earlier charges," he said.

"We have changed the charges in view of the evidence we have." Explaining the new charge of approaching a restricted area, Papaioannou told the court the two were in the Vassiliko port near Zigi at a time when the Cyprus army was engaged in what he called a sensitive operation. He did not elaborate.

Defence lawyer Antis Triantafyllides said the two defendants were in Cyprus in an effort to prevent a terrorist plot that

could have cost many lives in Israel.

He also said they were serving as lookouts for a meeting at Zigi, adding they had illegal scanners to intercept police communications because they did not want police to become suspicious and interfere in the meeting.

He hinted the meeting may have been between Israeli agents and a possible informant.

The two men were arrested with radio scanners, a lap-top computer, cellular phones and eight maps of the island.

The specific charges dropped against them were spying on Cyprus and conspiracy to spy with intent to harm the Mediterranean island nation.

Triantafyllides insisted "there is no evidence that my clients collected information or transmitted information against the Republic of Cyprus. Their mission was not to harm the republic or endanger its security." The defence lawyer said the men's mission is detailed in a report that was given to Cyprus' own intelligence agency.

King starts new treatment session

(Continued from page 1)

"We don't want to enter into the kind of speculation and gossip that's been circulating in recent days," said Prime Minister Fawaz Tarawneh on Friday, adding that he was in constant contact with the King.

"The important thing is that His Majesty's condition is stable... he has slept very well," he said.

King Hussein's non-Hodgkins lymphoma is his second bout with cancer in six years. He underwent surgery at the Mayo Clinic in 1992 to remove his left kidney and cancerous cells from his ureter.

In April 1998, surgeons at the Mayo Clinic removed a benign growth from his prostate.

In the Kingdom, Jordanians prayed for the health of King Hussein.

"May God protect Hussein Bin Talal, leader of the country, and return him healthy and cured," Imam Sami Saleh told worshippers at King Abdullah mosque.

"May God protect this nation and country," he told a congregation which included Arab interior ministers who gathered in Jordan for a conference on Friday (see separate story).

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Animaniacs
16:30 The Adventures of the Bush Patrol
17:00 Drama - Neighbours
18:00 French programme - Faust Pas Rever
19:00 New in French
19:15 French programme
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy - Murphy Brown
20:00 Today's Health
20:30 Drama - The Pretender
21:15 Rania's Show
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film - "Misery"
23:59 End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

05:07 Fajr
06:27 (Sunrise) Doha
11:49 Dhuhur
14:46 Asr
17:11 Maghreb
18:30 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4623366
Anglican Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church Tel. 4771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la

Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh

Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel.

4624757

The English-Language

Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.

4892679

The Baptist Church Tel.

4628052

The Armenian Catholic

Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox

Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Fine weather conditions will

Aqaba it will be moderate, cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 05/16

Aqaba 10/21

Deserts 03/17

Jordan Valley 11/21

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 17 Aqaba 19. Humidity

readings: Amman 35 per cent,

Aqaba 40 per cent.

Following are the temperatures

expected today in the following

areas:

Ajloun 03/07

Jerash 05/12

Urn Qays 06/12

Madaba 05/11

Petra 03/12

Dead Sea 13/24

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour 4750197

Dr. Afif Shukri 4898863

Dr. Khalil Ramadan 5358723

Dr. Osama Hussein 5347289

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rokn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:

Dr. Issam Salih (02)246858

Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

ZARQA:

Dr. Ratib Atallah (09)994424

Palestine Pharmacy (09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Resc-

ue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 487467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints 787111

Telephone Information (directo-

ry assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 0132

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special

Surgery 5921199

The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre 5856856

Luzmila 4630195

Khalid Maternity 4644281/6

Akileh Maternity 4642441/2

Jabel Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5607071

Jordan Hospital 5607550

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5157100

Amal Hospital 5607153

Al-Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

..... (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

..... (09)900560

Rn Sina Hospital (09)986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

..... (09)990990

East Timorese rebel chief cautious on Jakarta proposal

JAKARTA (AP) — A jailed East Timorese rebel chief is wary of Indonesia's offer to give up authority over the former Portuguese colony, an associate said Friday.

Arrested in 1992, Xanana Gusmao is considered a key figure in any negotiated solution to the conflict in East Timor, which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and annexed a year later.

Indonesian officials this week offered to relinquish control of the troubled territory if the East Timorese reject an offer of autonomy from Jakarta.

However, Indonesia strongly opposes a vote on independence in East Timor, saying it could lead to civil war there. It has not said how it will determine what kind of political future the 800,000 East Timorese want.

Gusmao, who has long campaigned for a vote on self-determination, told associates this week that he wants Indonesia to elaborate on its willingness to consider independence for

East Timor. "We are still waiting to see if the statement by the Indonesian government is serious," Mariano Sabino Lopez, an East Timorese activist, quoted Gusmao as saying.

Lopez, who often visits Gusmao in a Jakarta prison, is chairman of the Association of East Timorese Students and Youth, a group of separatist activists.

Thursday, the newspaper Mandiri quoted Gusmao as saying Indonesia's talk of independence for East Timor was long overdue.

"I am not particularly thrilled by the Indonesian government's latest plan to release East Timor," the paper reported him as saying from prison.

"There is still a long battle ahead. Still lots of uncertainties. For the sake of our struggle, I don't want to comment that much," Gusmao said.

A revered figure in East Timor, Gusmao is serving a 20-year sentence for leading a guerrilla war against Indonesian troops.

Facing international calls to free Gusmao, Indonesia has said it will move him to a special prison compound with more comfortable conditions.

The United Nations still considers Portugal to be the administering power in East Timor, and U.N.-sponsored talks between Jakarta and Lisbon have gained momentum in recent months.

When Indonesia invaded East Timor was riven by fighting between rival groups that erupted in the wake of a hasty withdrawal by the Portuguese colonisers after a 400-year rule.

Indonesia has warned old antagonisms will set off widespread violence if an independence vote is held in East Timor.

In East Timor's capital of Dili, a small group of separatists Friday scuffled with pro-Indonesian activists who were holding a meeting at a hotel.

The organisers of the meeting fired several warning shots to disperse the separatists, one of whom was arrested.



Political commissary of the East Timorese Socialist Party, Akara (centre), is flanked by an unidentified student and an unidentified fellow East Timorese as he speaks during a press conference held at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta. Akara said his party rejected the Indonesian autonomy offer and urged Jakarta to immediately arrange for the transfer of power in the former Portuguese colony (AFP photo)

NATO warning clears way for tough challenge to Milosevic

LONDON (AP) — Backed by a stiff NATO warning of possible military action, the Clinton administration and its allies today called for a negotiated settlement by mid-February to end the violence in Kosovo.

The six Western powers of the Contact Group declared in a statement the Serbian province must be granted "substantial autonomy."

In a stern message to Slobodan Milosevic, the foreign ministers said only a limited number of points required discussion.

The talks between the Yugoslav government and representatives of ethnic Albanians from the province would begin Feb. 6 in Rambouillet, France, and end within seven days, Robin Cook, the British foreign secretary, and his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrine, were picked to lead the negotiations.

In the meantime, the statement adopted by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia said the Serbs must stop "all offensive actions/repression" in Kosovo and promote the safe return of the thousands of civilians displaced from their homes as a result of the conflict.

Another demand leveled at Belgrade included a war crimes investigation of a reported massacre of 45 ethnic Albanian civilians two weeks ago in Racak, in southern Kosovo. The allies also want the suspension of Serb officers operating in the area at the time, until the results of the probe become available.

Further, they want Milosevic to reduce troops to the number he agreed upon last October in a cease-fire arranged by U.S. mediator Richard Holbrooke.

The ministers said the Kosovo Liberation Army

shared responsibility with Yugoslavia's security forces for the escalation of violence in the province. They said both sides would be held "accountable if they fail to take the opportunity now offered to them" to end the conflict.

Cook said he would fly to Belgrade Saturday, then go to Pristina to present the demands to Milosevic and the ethnic Albanians.

"We expect them to respond, and I will make it plain that this is a summons to negotiations. And we expect them to turn up in good faith with the objective of reaching an agreement on the detailed work we have done," Cook said.

Meantime, in Yugoslavia Friday, police clashed with ethnic Albanian rebels in a village near the Albanian border, killing 23 guerrillas, Serb sources said. One policeman was also reported killed in the village of Rogovo.

'China to step up on-line supervision'

BEIJING (R) — China plans to step up supervision of on-line communications as part of a nationwide effort to limit free speech, a Hong Kong-based human rights group said Friday.

The Information Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said the Ministry of Public Security has ordered a 24-hour watch on popular on-line chat rooms.

"As soon as counter-revolutionary discussions are discovered, the police should contact the managers and cut the service as well as investigate the real name of those who put up the message," the group said, citing a ministry directive.

The ministry could not immediately be reached for

comment. The order comes amid a push for greater supervision of Internet use in China and a crackdown on unlicensed Internet cafes and bars.

Last week, the ministry ordered businesses which provide on-line services to register with local information industry officials.

Internet cafes must also provide details about their business operations, including the names of all web surfers using the company's computers.

At least two bars in Beijing have already run afoul of the regulations and have been shut by police, one industry source said.

More than two million Chinese are on-line, state media said this month, and some experts predict the

number of web surfers to top 10 million by next year.

While recognising the important benefits the Internet brings to China's development, Beijing is also worried it poses a threat to social and national stability and has been struggling to control the resource.

In a landmark case in Shanghai, Lin Hai, a 30-year-old computer engineer, was sentenced to two years in jail last week for providing e-mail addresses to an overseas pro-democracy organisation.

Police have also stepped up their war on hackers, most recently detaining one software designer for installing a "logic bomb" inside two popular educational programmes.

U.N. to restart aid operations in east Congo

NAIROBI (R) — The United Nations is to restart aid operations in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo almost six months after rebellion there forced it to pull out.

The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) said it hoped to staff an international office in Goma, a town on Congo's border with Rwanda, by the end of next week.

"We have international staff who are prepared to go into eastern DRC and we are hopeful that we may have international staff going in by middle to end of next week," said Everett Ressler, UNICEF regional emergency adviser, Thursday.

The United Nations pulled out of eastern Congo last August for security reasons at the start of a rebellion by the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) fighting to oust President Laurent Kabila. Congolese staff

working for the U.N. remained there.

Immediately after the departure of international staff U.N. premises were looted and stripped bare. One estimate said 120 vehicles were stolen.

The civil war has divided Congo with rebels backed by Uganda and Rwanda controlling much of the north and east and Kabila's government, supported mainly by Angola and Zimbabwe, in the west and south.

Since 1994, the United Nations and aid agencies have come under intense scrutiny for their work in eastern Congo and stand accused of falling prey to political manipulation as they struggled to deal with large-scale humanitarian need.

This time the need in eastern Congo does not warrant massive intervention, Ressler said. "There is not a crisis in the sense of large numbers of people dying," Ressler told Reuters. "But it

becomes a quiet emergency. If you don't immunise people children die of things like measles, but not immediately."

UNICEF is to fly a cargo plane of medical supplies into Goma early next week including vaccinations for measles, solutions for cholera treatment and high protein biscuits.

U.N. officials acknowledge the return to eastern Congo presents political and security problems. One preparatory measure has been the proposal of a set of seven principles for independent, neutral humanitarian action.

Kabila's government had "accepted" the need for humanitarian assistance in rebel-controlled territory, Ressler said.

The United Nations also insisted on the return of looted property — much of which aid workers say was taken by Rwandan troops and taken back to Rwanda. Rwanda denies the charge.

China's Shenzhen police detonate bomb

SHENZHEN, China (R) — Police in China's southern boomtown of Shenzhen Friday discovered and detonated a bomb on a busy main street, halting traffic briefly but causing no injuries, police and witnesses said.

A witness who was near the scene said police detonated the bomb after finding it in a building one bus stop away from Shenzhen city hall and clearing the area of people and vehicles. It was not clear how police learned of the bomb.

The bombing was at least China's fifth this month, underscoring official fears of disorder in a society with millions of people seething with grievances over joblessness and corruption and where crude industrial explosives are easily available.

Shenzhen police were questioning an unspecified number of "criminal suspects," said a police official. He declined to give further details pending an investigation.

Police had cleared the area prior to setting off the bomb at around 10:00 a.m. (0200 GMT), the witness said. It was not immediately clear if buildings were damaged

when it was set off.

The witness said traffic resumed shortly after police had surveyed the bomb site, near one of the main arteries of Shenzhen, a free-wheeling city on China's border with Hong Kong.

The border city Friday teems with pedestrians, with China-based Hong Kong businessmen returning home for the weekend and Hong Kong residents heading to Shenzhen for its night life.

The prosperous Shenzhen is not without economic tensions, with the stock market doing poorly and many firms drowning in debt. The city is also awash with prostitution, drugs and organised crime.

Monday, an explosion believed to be caused by a homemade nail bomb ripped through a farmers' market in rural Hunan province, killing nine and injuring more than 65, hospital and police sources have said.

Hunan has been hit by farmers' protests over high taxes and corruption in some of China's worst rural violence this year.

On Jan. 17 a homemade bomb injured 37 people

aboard a packed bus in the Hunan provincial capital of Changsha.

On Jan. 6, a powerful bomb tore apart a bus in the north-eastern province of Liaoning, killing 19 passengers in what was an apparent abortive robbery attempt, police said.

State media reported that four people were injured in southern Zhuhai city when an unidentified explosive device blew up a trash can outside a bus stop on Jan. 13.

The bombings highlight simmering discontent in China over corruption, joblessness and falling farm incomes, alarming the government in a year studded with politically sensitive dates.

On this year's calendar are the 10th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen Square massacre and the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Communist government on Oct. 1.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin has led a push for social stability and ordered a crackdown on political opposition amid worries unrest could threaten Communist Party rule in 1999.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Feb. 6 deadline for Kosovo peace talks

LONDON (AFP) — Western powers and Russia Friday set a deadline of Feb. 6 for Belgrade and ethnic Albanian leaders to start peace talks on Kosovo and gave them a further week to reach an agreement. The talks are to take place in Rambouillet, near Paris, under the peace plan called for by a meeting of the six-nation Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia in London. The talks will be chaired by British Foreign Minister Robin Cook and his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine. It will be expected to find an accord on the basis of the Contact Group's proposal of "substantial autonomy" for the troubled Serbian province. If the parties do make progress, they would be given a further seven days to fine-tune an accord, according to the communiqué from the Contact Group meeting. It said they would be allowed the extra time "to complete the negotiations on a political settlement within 21 days" from now. Cook told a press conference after the Contact Group meeting that he would go to Belgrade Saturday to pass on the peace plan for the troubled Serbian province. The Contact Group comprises Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States.

Photographers implicated in Diana investigation meet with judge

PARIS (AP) — The judge in the Princess Diana investigation Friday questioned the photographers implicated in the case about events in the hours leading up to the crash. The photographers were summoned one-by-one into Judge Herve Stephan's office at the Palais de Justice in central Paris. Defence lawyers said the questions were based on contact apparently made the day of the crash between one of them and the head of Etoile Limousine, the company that supplied the Mercedes. According to a judicial source, phone records show that the owner of Etoile Limousine, Nils Siegel, had telephone contact three times the day of the crash with an independent photographer, Fabrice Chassery. Such phone contact would imply that the photographer may have learned the route the Mercedes would take ahead of time. When questioned earlier by Judge Stephan, Siegel had denied any contact with the photographer. Later he admitted receiving three calls, without revealing their content. No announcement from the judge was expected Friday. Lawyers said Stephan was expected to announce early next week that his investigation has been completed. Still, the case wouldn't be completely over. The parties would have several weeks to demand further tests or questioning before Stephan draws his conclusions. Diana, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed and their driver, Henri Paul, were killed in the Aug. 31, 1997 crash in a Paris traffic tunnel. Paul was drunk at the time. Nine photographers and a press motorcyclist who were tailing the Mercedes have been placed under formal investigation — one step short of being formally charged — for manslaughter and failing to aid people in danger. The manslaughter charges are expected to be dropped, but a few photographers are expected to be formally charged and tried on the second, lesser charge.

Cambodian MP's face pay cut to defuse teachers strike

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian MPs have been called on to accept a 70 per cent pay cut in a bid to defuse a teachers strike over low pay, the government announced Friday. But, alongside a proposed measure to pay for teachers, the gesture of austerity still leaves the government facing an annual bill of more than \$4 million to bring the industrial action to an end. Thousands of teachers have been on strike since Monday demanding their meagre \$20-a-month salaries be increased to \$300. The government Friday offered them a \$5 pay rise. It said savings from the MP's pay cut would amount to 3.5 billion riels (\$910,000) a year, but the proposed pay rise for teachers would cost 20 billion riels (\$5.2 million). Although the plan has gained the approval of Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP), it has to win the support of coalition partner FUNCINPEC to pass the national assembly. Most MPs and government officials — many of whom are driven around in luxury cars and wear expensive suits — are unlikely to be hit hard by a cut in their \$1,200-to-\$1,500 official monthly wage. Their state salary is generally viewed as supplementary to the financial perks available to those who hold positions of power in Cambodia.

Dual nicotine replacements best to quit smoking

LONDON (R) — Smokers who really want to kick the habit should try a combination of nicotine replacement therapies, according to new research published Friday. Instead of using a nicotine patch or a spray, use both. Researchers in Iceland found the people who combined the two methods were twice as likely to be off cigarettes after five years than those who used only the patches. Dr. Thorsteinn Blondal and scientists at the National University Hospital in Iceland studied 237 smokers over a six-year period. "Short and long term abstinence rates show that the combination of using a nicotine patch for five months with a nicotine nasal spray for one year is a more effective method of stopping smoking than using a patch only," they said in a study published in The British Medical Journal. The researchers believe the combined method works because the patches release nicotine slowly but the spray is more rapid and helps smokers to overcome any sudden urges for a cigarette.

Chinese man arrested for murder, rape of Japanese student

BEIJING (AFP) — Authorities in southwest Sichuan province have arrested a Chinese man in connection with the murder of a Japanese student whose body was found floating in a river, the Huasheng News said Friday. The body of Reiko Fujimoto, a student at Beijing's People's University, was recovered from a river near the tourist town of Leshan on Jan. 22. She had been raped and beaten to death with a blunt object. Police charged Tang Daming, a Chinese with whom Fujimoto had become acquainted at the Sujun hotel, with the murder just four hours after the girl had died, the newspaper reported. Witnesses told investigators that the two had a loud argument and a woman's scream was heard during a sightseeing boating excursion before the duo disappeared. Police later found Tang, still covered in blood, at the Sujun Hotel where he confessed to the crimes, the report said. Fujimoto's student identification card and about 900 yuan (\$100) were also recovered from the scene.

World
Charles
Camilla
almos

LONDON (AFP) — The appearance of Prince Charles and Princess Camilla at a public event in London on Friday was a surprise to many. The couple had been seen together for the first time since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in August 1997. The couple's first public appearance since the tragedy was a surprise to many. The couple's first public appearance since the tragedy was a surprise to many.

Their pictures were taken Friday, taking up whole pages, with a new print of the couple.

Bang elect

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's first female prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, was elected to a second term in office on Friday. She won a landslide victory in the general election, securing a majority of seats in the parliament.

Vaccin

LONDON (R) — A medical expert has given a green light to a new vaccine against the deadly disease, Ebola, which has killed more than 100 people in West Africa.

Spanish

ALGECIRAS, Sp. — Spanish police have arrested a man in connection with the murder of a Japanese student whose body was found floating in a river, the Huasheng News said Friday.

World News

Charles and Camilla: Now it's 'almost' official

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Charles' first public appearance with his long-time mistress Camilla Parker Bowles has signalled a new phase in their search for public blessing for their relationship.

The heir to the British throne left a private function late Thursday with Parker Bowles to a blaze of flashing lights from more than 100 photographers and television crews who had been waiting years for such a moment.

Tipped off to expect the couple's first joint public appearance, they had been staking their places on the pavement outside the plush Ritz Hotel since the day before.

Charles and Parker Bowles' appearance — after years of avoiding paparazzi lenses — signalled the couple now view their relationship as "official," press commentators said.

Parker Bowles, 51, arrived for her sister Annabel Elliott's birthday party earlier than Charles, 50, along with her son Tom, 23, and daughter Laura, 20, but the couple left together.

As they walked down the steps, Charles put a hand on her back to steer her to a waiting car, a sign of familiarity the press pack had prayed for.

Their pictures dominated Friday's press, taking up whole front pages, with acres of newsprint devoted

inside to the story.

Charles and Parker Bowles have taken great pains never to be seen together in public, despite a relationship stretching back to before he married Diana, Princess of Wales.

The couple have been at the same functions, such as a society wedding late last year, but always arrived and left separately and discreetly.

Their relationship began in the 1970s, but was put on hold when they both married. Neither marriage survived.

After their respective divorces they attempted gradually to secure greater public acceptance, but that was again put on hold following Diana's death in Paris in the early hours of August 31, 1997.

It was Parker Bowles to whom Diana once referred when she spoke of "three of us in this marriage." She was reviled while Diana was alive and blamed for the break-up of the royal couple.

Since Diana's death, she and Charles had not appeared in public together, although they had been seen separately at occasions such as their respective 50th birthday parties, which each hosted for the other.

So Thursday's appearance was a public milestone, even though privately she



The Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles step out in public together for the first time, following the 50th birthday dinner-dance for Parker Bowles' sister, Annabel Elliott, at the Ritz Hotel in central London (AFP photo)

regularly stays overnight at Charles' London apartments in St. James' Palace and at his home in Highgrove, west of London.

She has been introduced to both Prince William, 16, and 14-year-old Prince Harry, Charles' sons by Diana.

Opinion has softened

on her since Diana's death. The royal-hungry tabloids particularly have toned down their once virulent coverage.

"At last," the Mirror triumphed. "After 26 years, Prince Charles finally declares his love for the woman he has privately adored."

The Daily Mail

"Together") and Express ("It's official, we're a couple") had similar sentiments.

In an editorial, the Sun wrote: "At last the world knows for sure she and Charles are a couple to be reckoned with."

"They no longer have to hide their love away,"

Indo-U.S. nuclear talks open in Delhi

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India and the United States resumed nuclear non-proliferation talks here Friday in an upbeat mood that masked the apparent lack of progress from seven previous rounds of discussions.

The two-day meeting between Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott marks the eighth round of talks since India conducted a series of underground nuclear tests last May.

"It is high time this relationship is put on a much stronger footing," Talbott told reporters before the start.

"We have the highest hopes," he added.

For his part, Singh said he looked forward to "a very productive and useful round of talks."

Although the dialogue has been relatively friendly, there has been no tangible progress, with India flatly refusing to accept U.S. attempts to apply benchmarks to aspects of its nuclear policy.

In an interview with an Indian newspaper before leaving Washington, Talbott admitted the two sides remained far apart on issues such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, which India rejects as being biased in favour of the five recognised nuclear states.

"We simply disagree about that," said

Talbott, who declined to predict a time-frame for the talks reaching some sort of resolution.

"Time frame? Dangerous to say, because ... at least forseeably, I think we are going to have to agree to differ for some time on NPT."

U.S. insistence that India sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been the main focus of the dialogue, together with fissile material production, export controls and other non-proliferation issues.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has promised India will sign the CTBT before September.

India's underground nuclear explosions in May triggered retaliatory tests by Pakistan, and earned both countries a raft of global sanctions led by the United States.

As in the past, Talbott refused to be drawn on precisely what steps New Delhi would have to take in order for the sanctions to be lifted.

"For (the dialogue) to work, there really has to be a fair degree of confidentiality," he said.

The United States is also trying to pin India down on its minimum defence requirements — a move that Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes was quick to reject Friday.

"What kind of deterrence we need will be decided by us and no one else can tell us what the level of that deterrence should be,"

Fernandes told foreign journalists.

However, Talbott insisted he was not necessarily asking for "specific numbers" regarding India's defence strategy.

"But it is our hope that, in answering these cardinal questions of what constitutes sufficient and effective deterrence, what kind of military postures will truly enhance the safety of the Indian state, that India will choose to follow a path of restraint."

Talbott is expected to request clarification of press reports that India intends to carry out tests of a new-generation ballistic missile.

Washington has already made it clear any such tests would only hamper negotiations.

Singh is expected to protest continued U.S. opposition to World Bank loans to India. Similar restrictions on Pakistan have been eased, while India is awaiting around \$1.7 billion in World Bank loans.

Talbott said he understood the "ill feeling on the Indian side," but reiterated that while sanctions were regrettable, they remained "a fact of life."

Talbott will be leading a U.S. delegation on a South Asian tour that will also take in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Immediately after his discussions here, Talbott will fly to Islamabad.

Bangladesh opposition spurn election chief's talk offer

DHAKA (AFP) — The Bangladesh opposition has rejected an invitation from Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena for talks on holding peaceful municipal polls, political sources said here Friday.

Letters were sent out to the major political parties, but they rejected the invitation after talks among members of an opposition alliance led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former Prime Minister Khleda Zia, the sources said.

An official of the independent election commission

said the aim of the meeting was to narrow the gap between the commission and the political parties as well as persuade them not to work against the non-party three-day staggered municipal polls set to start Feb. 23.

The opposition was planning to enforce general strikes during the polls, newspapers reported.

Newspapers quoted BNP leaders as saying the offer of talks was rejected as the opposition's main demand is Hena's resignation.

An opposition member said it was true that members of opposition parties had registered as candidates

in the polls, where members stand as individuals without party affiliations, but added it did not "reflect the real situation inside the parties ... they would be persuaded to withdraw."

The opposition accuses Hena of bias in handling a by-election last month which it says the government won by fraud, a claim rejected by independent observers.

The opposition has already enforced one strike to protest the municipal polls. Three people, including two ruling Awami League activists were killed during Tuesday's strike,

which was aimed at forcing the resignation of the election chief and the rescheduling of the municipal polls.

The alliance — the BNP, a Jatiya Party faction led by deposed president, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami and the religious group Islami Oikkyu Jote — has said it would continue protests to back its demands.

A commission statement said 9,184 candidates, including 1,807 women, would contest the municipal polls.

It will be the first time women have been able to stand for municipal seats.

Vaccine reduces recurrence of bowel cancer

LONDON (R) — An experimental anti-cancer vaccine given to colon cancer patients after surgery reduced the recurrence of the disease, Dutch doctors said Friday.

The vaccine, called active specific immunotherapy or ASI, was customised for each patient. It contained cells from the tumour and a strain of bacteria to kick start the immune system to kill any remaining cancer cells in the body.

Professors Jan Vermorken and Herbert Pinedo, of Vrije

University Hospital in Amsterdam, said in a report in The Lancet medical journal that ASI "significantly lowered the rate of tumour recurrences."

Colon cancer is potentially curable by surgery but a successful outcome depends on the extent of the disease. The researchers tested the vaccine on patients with stage II and III colon cancer. The vaccine showed significant results in patients with stage II colon cancer in which the tumour has penetrated the bowel wall but

remained localised. But it seemed to have little effect on patients with stage III cancer that has spread to the lymph nodes.

The researchers tested the vaccine made with a bacteria called bacilli Calmette-Guerin (BCG) on 254 patients with either stage II or III colon cancer. The patients were randomly selected and had either surgery or surgery and the vaccination.

After a five-year follow-up, tumours recurred in 40 of the 126 patients who had

surgery, but in only 25 of 128 patients who had surgery and the vaccination.

"One of the most appealing aspects of ASI in our trial was the quality of life of the patients during treatment. No patient discontinued treatment early because of side effects," the doctors said.

Colon cancer affects more than 3.5 million people worldwide each year. If the disease is detected early the five-year survival rate is 80-90 per cent.

Spanish fishermen threat anew to blockade Gibraltar

ALGETRAS, Spain (AFP) — Spanish fishermen issued a new threat Friday to blockade the Gibraltar border after police patrol boats confronted fishing vessels in waters near the Rock overnight, trade union sources said.

Several patrol boats from Gibraltar, a British colony, harassed the Spanish fishermen, forcing them to return to port here, said Miguel Alberto Diaz, a leader of the CCOO trade union, quoted in the Spanish press.

He said the fishermen had decided to blockade the Spanish-Gibraltar border Friday in retaliation.

The row over fishing rights, simmering since the early 1990s, flared again Wednesday when Gibraltar police seized a Spanish fishing boat, arrested its 14-member crew and confiscated its nets for illegal fishing.

Madrid believes the action was in breach of a verbal agreement between Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes and his

British counterpart Robin Cook in October which allowed Spanish fishermen access to their traditional fishing grounds near the Rock.

Wednesday, the Spanish government was reported to have issued a 72-hour ultimatum to Britain to comply with the October agreement or face retaliation in the form of tight restrictions on the land frontier between Gibraltar and the Spanish mainland.

Madrid also said it would step-up protection of local

fishermen.

That promise prompted fishermen to call off a border blockade planned for Thursday.

But later Thursday the British government denied it had received any formal request from Spain.

The Gibraltar government argues that fishing in the area should be banned for ecological reasons. Spain does not recognise the Gibraltar government or British authority over the territory, which has been a crown colony since 1713.

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Concerns worth studying

THE MEETING of the council of Arab interior ministers that began here yesterday was off to a good start when HRH Crown Prince Abdullah inaugurated the deliberations on a variety of issues affecting Arab security.

There are several key issues on the agenda of the Arab meeting ranging from combating organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, to cooperation in the fight against crime and the extradition of criminals. Terrorism is slated to be accorded the lion's share of the deliberations not only because it has become a global problem, but because many Arab countries suffer from its consequences. On this score we trust that the ministers will also discuss in an enlightened manner the root causes of terrorism that need to be taken into consideration and dealt with. It is never enough to fight any form of crime without dwelling on the factors that may have led to its commission.

Drug trafficking and related crimes will also figure high on the agenda of the Arab ministers, and rightly so. At this juncture the ministers might want to reconsider the imposition of the death penalty on drug-related crimes and on drug trafficking. Many countries in the world have abolished the death penalty because of its inhumane nature on the one hand and because it is possible to lead to injustice.

The extradition of criminals is also a matter which is slated to receive special attention. In this vein, the ministers should approach with utmost care the issue of political crimes. Presumably extradition of common criminals is a relatively easy matter to resolve, but when it comes to politically-related crimes, we are faced with other criteria that the Arab ministers would have to reflect on before taking a final decision on the matter.

Crime and punishment is a complex subject which requires scientific research in which socio-economic factors are taken into consideration. The tradition of Islam has decreed that when a crime like theft, for example, is committed during periods of poverty, thieves are exempted from the prescribed punishment.

While we commend the ministers on their quest for secure and stable societies, we note that real security depends on factors that include more democratic practices, a more equitable distribution of wealth and above all equipping young people with better education that would help them to cope with life.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's editorial said the recent visits of Saudi Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright lending their countries' congratulations to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, express their regard for His Majesty King Hussein's and Jordan's high position. There is no doubt that all Jordanians feel deep appreciation and gratitude towards brothers and friends, who have always been there to support Jordan and express feelings of solidarity, which increase the country's pride in the Hashemite leadership's role and achievements, added the editorial. Al Dustour said it was totally aware of the Saudi Prince's important, deep and sincere expressions, as well as Albright's personal and official support for the Kingdom, including the securing of economic assistance. The newspaper praised the two officials' visits, which, it said, were a result of King Hussein's efforts to strengthen Jordan's relations with countries around the world.

Al Dustour's Mikhael Jumai'an said the Arab foreign ministers' meeting failed because it did not meet Iraq's demands, especially concerning the condemnation of U.S.-British aggression and the lifting of sanctions. There is no doubt that there were secret and serious efforts to destroy the meeting, said Jumai'an, who added that it is also now certain that Iraq has implemented the U.N. resolutions and has reassured its neighbours that it no longer constitutes a danger to them. The recent aggression targeted senior Iraqi leaders, including Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, his deputy Taha Ramadan, Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Sahhaf, said the writer. Jumai'an also warned that the Arabs must not involve themselves in illegitimate U.S.-Jewish attacks to destroy the Iraqi regime and the Iraqi people.

King's choice has people's support

PRIME MINISTER Fayed Tarawneh said it best: Jordan is in shock.

The overwhelming joy and relief we all experienced when His Majesty King Hussein returned home on Jan. 19 after a six-month treatment abroad has been replaced by deep concern and anxiety over the relapse of his ailment. Almost everyone of His Majesty's subjects is today wondering whether he or she could do something to make sure the King returns to our midst in full health. No sacrifice is too big for our beloved King, the head of our family. Many in Jordan and elsewhere have aptly adopted the theme "Hussein is Jordan and Jordan is Hussein" to emphasise the bond between the King and his family which includes every Jordanian regardless of origin or birthplace. Nothing could better explain the unique personality of our King. And today we are worried about his health and pray that it is only a passing phase in his eventful life, and that he will be home among us soon to guide us through happy and difficult times.

One of the most striking features of His Majesty's ailment is the frankness with which Jordanians have been kept informed.

Never in the life of an Arab head of state has there been a case where people are told of the truth concerning a leader's health. This has been for several reasons including concerns over political stability and security. And it shows that uncertainty about the future is the key word to describe those regimes, and that maintaining continuity — which entails national stability and security — is not assured.

Jordanians are lucky: we don't have such fears. We know that continuity is assured, and the wise policies and course set by the King will be followed to the letter and spirit as he remains in hospital. That is what His Majesty made sure of with his decisions taken during the few days he spent with us here last week. Those decisions were not necessarily limited to naming His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah as our new crown prince. We hope

to see soon the scope and impact of his decisions in all aspects of our lives. There is no uncertainty there either. We are all fortified by the conviction that no decision taken by the King would have the welfare of his subjects as second priority. We are hearing a lot of noise from armchair observers outside Jordan that the King's choice of Prince Abdullah has cast a cloud over the politics of the Kingdom as a key regional player. To them we say, don't attempt to be more Jordanian than Jordanians themselves. The choice was made by King Hussein, whose own reign was once predicted to have a short lifespan because of the absence of natural resources and the political turmoil that is so characteristic of the Middle East, yet who is the longest-serving head of state in the region confounding all those predictions. Those who predicted gloom for Jordan saw only natural resources as the key to progress and development. They overlooked the best assets Jordan had and has — His Majesty King Hussein and the industrious people of Hussein's Jordan.

Jordanian Perspective



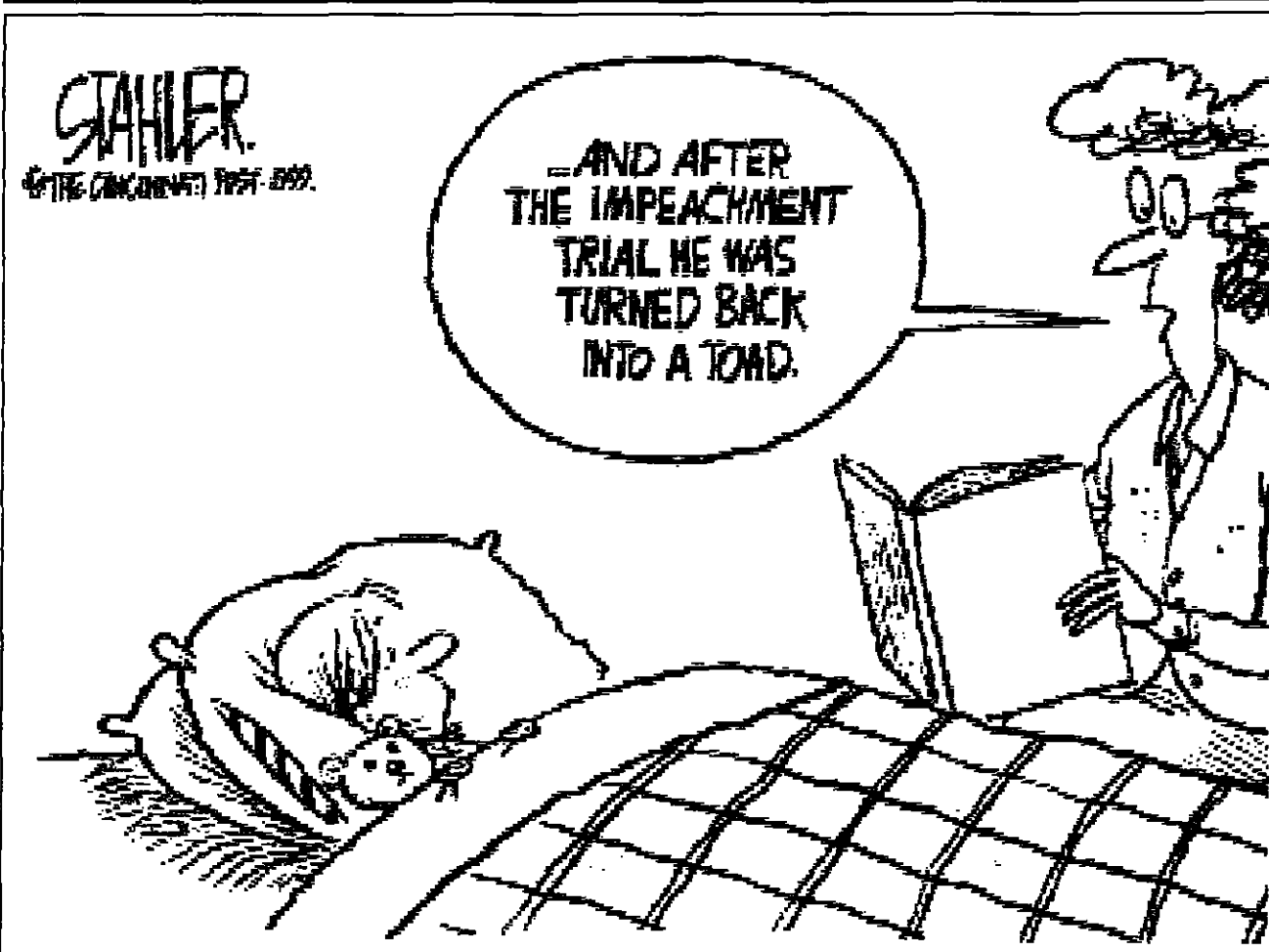
Musa Keilani

Some have ventured to suggest that Crown Prince Abdullah's political acumen has not been tested. May we turn around and ask them: Was the political acumen of Prince Hussein tested when he actually assumed the Throne of Jordan at the age of 18? Can it be brushed aside that Prince Abdullah has spent most of his 37 years close to his father, learning the intricacies of political decision-making from some-

one like King Hussein, whose statesmanship has become the stuff of legends? We Jordanians have no doubt whatsoever that our Crown Prince is more than fit and capable of performing whatever is expected of him, whether in the political, economic or social context of Jordan. After all, he has the endorsement of the smartest and most intelligent among us, King Hussein.

Over the years, the King has taught us not to allow our worries to cloud our judgement, and obstruct our way forward. As such, we should not allow our concern for our dear King to hamper our thinking. The best way we can respond and make him happy will be by focusing more on our work and contributing to make Jordan a modern state.

While we continue to pray for his good health and early return home, let us also not allow ourselves to be pried away from the immediate issues that concern us, and that begins with aligning ourselves fully and solidly behind King Hussein's choice of successor.



Tidbits from around the planet

Out to Lunch

EVER WONDER if your pets actually enjoy the food you feed them? Do you sometimes get the feeling that they only eat the mess in front of them for your benefit? Do you fear a pet coup brought about by an angry response to tasteless and boring food served to our not-quite-human friends? Well, the time for anxiety is over, thanks to an industrious company in the U.K. which is bringing the advertising message direct to the animals themselves. In an attempt to rectify one of the "conundrums" of the pet food advertising industry, as a spokesman for the ad agency put it, commercials will now be aimed specifically at cats and dogs and not their human masters.

The goal of this revolutionary advertising campaign is to generate a response, including ear and tail twitching, among the pets themselves by including certain sounds and images in the commercials that animals find appealing. These reactions on the parts of the pets will, presumably, encourage their masters to buy this particular brand of food. The logic, therefore, if I understand this scheme correctly, is this: a pet-owner, seeing his or her beloved not-quite-human companion leaping at or otherwise reacting to a commercial on the television screen, is supposed to interpret this as genuine desire on the part of the animal for the product. The fact that pets have no purchasing power is conveniently circumvented.

While at first sight the plan looks good, a more thorough examination reveals some serious flaws. One is that pet-owners must ensure that their pets behave properly and actually watch the commercial. The need for a human agent, alas, still remains. Another problem is the disappointment that the animals themselves will certainly feel when it turns out that the food is just plain pet food and doesn't really include images of fish and birds. Also, it is not clear whether the advertising company has taken into consideration possible epilepsy-inducing effects that some images can have.

Still, despite these reservations, this advertising campaign has my full endorsement. The audiences

that can make judgements have long been exhausted, and even children are becoming more media savvy these days. Winning the animals over should be as easy as shooting fish in a barrel.

Lost in Space

SOME PEOPLE just can't win. And some just don't deserve to. A man was recently apprehended in the U.S. minutes after robbing a convenience store. But don't commend the police for a quick, well-done job: the suspect was filmed by a security camera wearing a hat that had his name and place of work written prominently on the front. All the authorities had to do to find the man and bring him in to custody was make a phone call. Let's hope this person will develop a little more common sense in prison.

Standing Ready

THE HIGH death toll and lack of facilities for survivors of the recent earthquake in Colombia, which killed over 600 people, were blamed on a lack of preparedness to deal with such a disaster. Perhaps if the government spent less time supporting right-wing death squads, who were responsible for a recent massacre of over 120 civilians, and less efforts to crush the FARC, it would be in a better position to help those in need.

In other news, ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet's fate hangs in the balance while Britain's law lords consider arguments presented by Amnesty International, the Chilean government, and the best defence lawyers military coup money can buy, among others. A Chilean air force plane, meanwhile, continues its lonely vigil, waiting to fly the ageing senator-for-life back to his home country in the unfortunate event he is released. Now that is a level of readiness the Colombian government should take note of.

RECOMMENDED READING: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams. *Worried about the future? Got a case of the "what's going to happen now" angst? Had a bad week? Wrap a towel around your head*

Out of Order



Brian Brown

'Perhaps if the [Colombian] government spent less time supporting right-wing death squads... and less efforts to crush the FARC, it would be in a better position to help those in need'

and above all, Don't Panic! The Hitchhiker's Guide tells the story of Arthur Dent, the only human being left after the earth is destroyed to make way for an intergalactic by-pass. The novel also tackles such issues as bad poetry, the origins of the world, the true order of terrestrial intelligence (humans rank a poor third, after mice and dolphins), and the answer to the meaning of life (42). The Guide offers practical advice on everything that matters.

It's the King's decision

Compiled by
Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week focused attention on His Majesty King Hussein's historic decision to appoint His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah as Crown Prince. They also commented on the continuous showdown between Iraq and the United States and the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh commented on His Majesty King Hussein's highly sensitive decision to remove HRH Prince Hassan and replace him with HRH Crown Prince Abdullah as his heir to the Throne, saying the Constitution gives the King the right to make such a change. Jordanians stand behind the King and support his decision, said Faneh, adding that the King's decision was predicted by many Jordanians who have monitored his statements and remarks in which he repeatedly hinted a change is definitely coming. The King appointed Prince Hassan as Crown Prince during a very critical moment in the country's history and when the King's eldest son was only three years old. Now, says Faneh, the child is an adult and the country enjoys stability, which prompted the King to make such a decision. Replacing Prince Hassan does not, in any way, underestimate his achievements as crown prince for 34 years, said Faneh. Prince Hassan is intellectual and wise, but under the democratic monarchy system, the King has the final saying concerning who takes his place.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Salameh Ne'mat said the King's decision to appoint Prince Abdullah as crown prince is the first step in a series of reforms in the country. Ne'mat charged that Jordanians are looking forward to seeing changes in the Kingdom's democratic process. Democracy in Jordan has faced many setbacks after it was launched in the late eighties due to the continued crises in the region. Economic pressure and the peace treaty with Israel has driven Jordan to close in on itself, he said. Ne'mat said the "one-person-one-vote" electoral law and the heinous Press and Publications Law which has limited freedom of expression, both wiped out all accomplishments of the first four years of the democratic process. The writer said appointing Prince Abdullah as crown prince will lead to a feeling of settlement and continuity in the country; key words for any possible reform. Ne'mat predicted that appointing Prince Abdullah

Week in Print

Al Dustour's Jihad Momani said when the U.S. attacked the southern Iraq city Basra, it wanted to tell the Arab foreign ministers, meeting in Cairo to discuss the Iraqi crisis, that their final statement showing the Arab World's dissatisfaction with the attack is worthless and that it does not really care for them or their feelings as long as they do not issue a statement condemning the attack. The writer criticised Arab countries for issuing weak statements in order to win the American and British satisfaction, ignoring the feelings of 20 million Iraqis, crippled by inhuman sanctions. He said the U.S. does not respect its Arab allies who issued that statement. If it did, it would not have attacked Basra, one of the most important Arab cities, he said. The writer did not rule out the possibility that the U.S. attacked a civilian target on purpose to show the Arabs its determination to destroy the Iraqi people.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi said Iraq should not have slammed the Arab League after the Arab League of Foreign Ministers meeting failed to meet its expectations. Iraq wants the Arab countries to reject and condemn American missile attacks, but Arab countries issued a milder statement. But the statement's meaning is clear in rejecting the attack, said the writer. The Arab ministerial meeting issued positive decisions which Iraq should appreciate. Among those decisions were the emphasis that Iraq should remain united and a strong rejection of interference in its internal matters, said Rimawi. The Arab League did not adopt a decision calling for the lifting of the sanctions, but the meeting concluded that Arab countries are prepared to cooperate and coordinate with the United Nations Security Council to seek a near lifting of the sanctions, he added. What is special about the Arabs' meeting is that, for the first time, the Iraqi question has been addressed by Arab states who had bad relations with Iraq, he said. Iraq should not have criticised Arab countries because this will weaken Arab solidarity which is necessary to see the Iraqi people through their crisis, he added.

South Lebanon: Peacekeeping is mission unaccomplished

By Laura King
Associated Press

MORNING MIST was still rising from the silvery leaves of a hillside olive grove when nine Shiite Muslim guerrillas set about their task: positioning a 106 mm recoilless cannon and preparing to fire a few quick rounds at an Israeli army outpost just across the ridge.

So the passing group of United Nations peacekeepers patrolling the rugged valleys of southern Lebanon did the only thing they could: They approached the guerrillas — bearded, edgy, brandishing AK-47 rifles — and very, very politely asked them to go away.

"I shook hands with each of them, and talked quietly and reasonably," recounted Maj. Jerry Tuikoro, gesturing toward the grove where he and his small contingent of peacekeepers from faraway Fiji had come across the guerrillas from the Iranian-backed Hizbollah a few days earlier.

The U.N. troopers, who are

allowed to use their weapons only in self-defence, must rely under such circumstances on persuasiveness. This time, it worked.

"They were frustrated," Tuikoro recalled. "They're trigger-happy, some of them! But we just kept on talking, and finally they left." Even though this particular encounter ended peacefully, the U.N. troops — like most of the half-dozen parties to the muddled proxy war in southern Lebanon — harbour few illusions about a real halt to hostilities any time soon. There's always another morning, another hillside, another weapon of choice.

Since its creation in 1978, the nine-nation U.N. force has had the same mission: to verify an Israeli troop withdrawal, help the Lebanese government reassert sovereignty, and establish a secure area. The peacekeepers are the first to admit none of the goals has been achieved.

"We've been fighting for our own survival, sandwiched between the warring parties," said Timur Goksel, a senior U.N. adviser. "Peacekeep-

ing? You have to have peace to keep it." In the 985-square-kilometre U.N.-patrolled zone, Israeli troops and their allied Lebanese militia do daily battle with the guerrillas of Hizbollah, along with fighters from other Islamist groups.

Also in the volatile mix is a dormant but potentially dangerous band of disaffected Palestinians who do not support Yasser Arafat's attempts to make peace with Israel.

"It's a microcosm of the Middle East," Goksel said of the U.N. zone, which runs inland from the biblical port city of Tyre toward the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. "The amount of ammunition flying around is quite something." With this welter of combatants, the peacekeepers often find themselves in the line of fire. Over the years, 222 of them have died.

In Israel, there is growing impetus — driven by steadily mounting casualties of their own — to find a way out of what is widely seen as a military morass. Israel keeps about 1,500 combat soldiers in a swath of

southern Lebanon to protect northern Israel from cross-border attacks. But in spite of Israeli sentiment in favour of a negotiated pullback, the stage could be set for an escalation of hostilities.

After Hizbollah guerrillas rocketed northern Israeli towns in December, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened harsh retaliatory strikes, perhaps deep inside Lebanon. In one week in mid-January, Israel staged four straight days of air raids in the south.

The guerrillas say they will continue to exact revenge for the deaths of their own fighters as well as those of civilians.

Their December rocket attacks came after a stray missile killed a Lebanese woman and six of her children.

Few know the war's toll on ordinary villagers better than the people of Qana, a shell-pocked market town 11 kilometres north of the Israeli border. The Fijian contingent of the U.N. peacekeeping force is

'It's a microcosm of the Middle East'

based here — a circumstance that had unintended and horrific consequences nearly three years ago.

On April 18, 1996, at the height of an Israeli bombing campaign against Hizbollah, about 800 villagers took refuge at the Fijian base, believing they would be safe there. Instead, the flimsy huts in which they were sheltering came under fire, and about 100 civilians died.

The exact number of dead remains unknown because the bodies of those killed, many of them women and children, were so badly mangled.

Near the site of the shelling, vil-

lagers have built a memorial of long marble tombs decorated with portraits of the dead. One of the shelled huts has been left as it was, except for a new roof. Blood-soaked blankets and scraps of burned metal still litter the charred floor inside.

Nawal Bolgi, 48, who lost 20 relatives, wept as she recalled what happened that day. "Boom — no more family," she said.

"Everyone was dead," Israel said the shelling was a mistake, and accused the guerrillas of causing the catastrophe by staging attacks from civilian areas in full knowledge they would trigger retaliation.

But even if Hizbollah used villagers as a shield, support for the guerrillas has only grown stronger in Qana.

Posters of Hizbollah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, are everywhere, and the town is dotted with arresting tributes to dead guerrillas: larger-than-life, colourfully painted metal cut-outs of bearded young men in turbans and robes.

The ayatollah who shook the world

By Paul Taylor
Reuters

A FRAIL, white-bearded man sat cross-legged on a Persian rug in a suburban bungalow near Paris and spoke in a faint monotone into a cassette-recorder. And the world trembled.

Twenty years ago next week, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, an ascetic Shi'ite Muslim cleric, returned to Iran to a tumultuous welcome to lead one of this century's great upheavals — the first Islamic revolution.

Exploiting a national network of mosques, the Shi'ite cult of martyrdom and the strange indecisiveness of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Khomeini replaced one of the Middle East's richest U.S.-backed oil monarchies with an austere theocratic state.

"We will end foreign domination in Iran. America cannot do anything," the ayatollah vowed in an interview with Reuters shortly after he settled in the village of Neauphle-le-Chateau, near Versailles, in October 1978.

"Do not be afraid to give up your lives and your belongings in the service of God, Islam and the Muslim Nation," he told his followers in one of the taped messages that sent millions of unarmed demonstrators into the streets to brave the Shah's army.

Unlike many revolutionary systems, the Islamic republic that Khomeini built has endured despite a 20-year confrontation with the United States, an eight-year war with Iraq and waves of bombings, assassinations, executions and power struggles.

Khomeini, who became supreme leader with sweeping powers under the constitution adopted in 1979, died in his bed a decade later, revered by most Iranians but reviled in the West.

His mausoleum in south Tehran is a shrine for pilgrims. While the revolution devoured many of its children in spasms of violence, Muslim clerics still wield most power in Iran.

The complex institutional checks and balances developed by Khomeini to guard against a coup and prevent one faction from monopolising power provide the framework for a permanent power struggle among his heirs.

The contrast between the Shah, whose imperial family flaunted its fabulous petrodollar wealth in gaudy ceremonies, and the ayatollah, who lived frugally on a diet of bread, fruit, nuts and yoghurt, could hardly have been more stark.

Twice a day, the stern old man in dark robes and a black turban indicating descent from the Prophet

Mohammed, crossed the Route de Chevreuse under French police guard to lead prayers and deliver sermons in a blue-and-white tent pitched in the garden of the two-storey house that served as his headquarters.

Students, businessmen, clerics and politicians flocked to Paris from Iran and the diaspora in Europe and the United States to talk and pray with Khomeini after President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing gave him temporary refuge.

The ayatollah listened to moderate advice but held firm to his course, dismissing calls for compromise to avert bloodshed.

"There will be no compromise with the Shah. Until the day an Islamic republic is established in Iran, the struggle of our people will continue," Khomeini said in the interview.

The turbulent cleric had been expelled from Iraq under pressure from the Shah, seeking to end a snow-balling revolt against his rule spearheaded by Shi'ite religious leaders, demonstrating students and striking oil workers.

He had launched his battle to drive the Shah from his "peacock throne" in 1962-63, condemning the monarch's White Revolution land reforms as un-Islamic and denouncing the immunity privileges of U.S. advisers and oil companies in Iran.

He was exiled first to Turkey, then to the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. In Neauphle-le-Chateau, Khomeini was surrounded by a circle of Western-educated aides who went on to play key roles in the early revolutionary governments before being sidelined by Islamic hardliners.

A large sign in English and Persian outside Khomeini's headquarters proclaimed: "The ayatollah has no spokesman." But the men who assured journalists that Iran would be a liberal Islamic democracy would qualify nowadays as spin doctors.

Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, an economist who lived in Paris, acted as his interpreter and secretary. He was elected the first president of the Islamic republic in 1980 before being

hounded from office by hardline mobs a year later, fleeing for his life to the French capital.

Sadeq Qotbzadeh, a former anti-Shah student activist expelled from the United States in 1969 and who had a Syrian passport, became head of radio and television, then foreign minister. He resigned in 1980 and was executed in 1982 for allegedly plotting to overthrow Khomeini.

Ebrahim Yazdi, a cancer researcher who lived in Texas, was Khomeini's chief English-speaking aide. He sought to persuade the West that the Islamic movement was not manipulated by the Soviet Union or bent on anarchy.

He became foreign minister in the first revolutionary government but was forced out for trying to end the occupation of the U.S. embassy by militant students in November 1979 after Washington admitted the deposed Shah for medical treatment.

Yazdi today heads a small, semi-legal opposition party, the Iran Freedom Movement, but has little influence.

Khomeini's other confidant was his second son Ahmad, a mullah (clergyman) who was his closest aide during his decade at the helm of the Islamic republic and the key link with the students occupying the U.S. embassy. He died in 1995.

Khomeini's elder son, Morteza, had died during their exile in Iraq after being visited by two Iranians suspected of being agents of the Shah's hated SAVAK secret police.

The ayatollah's wife, Batul, accompanied him in France but played no public role. Interviewing Khomeini was a strangely impersonal experience. Questions were submitted in writing and Bani-Sadr translated the written replies before the reporter was admitted for a brief meeting with the ayatollah.

There was no handshake. Khomei-

ni stared at the carpet while speaking rather than seeking eye-contact with the interviewer.

Some of his delphic statements required interpretation. When he said: "We will cut off the hands of the foreign agents," aides hastened to explain he meant rooting out foreign domination in Iran, not severing limbs.

As the revolution moved towards a climax, sending world oil prices soaring to record levels, the throngs of supporters and journalists swelled at Neauphle.

The French authorities who had initially treated Khomeini with caution, warning him three times to refrain from political statements, gave him VIP treatment.

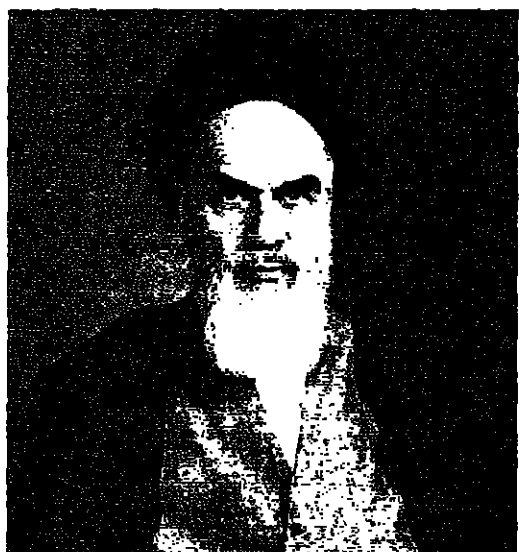
Two weeks after the Shah left Iran on "holiday" on January 10, never to return, the ayatollah, his entourage and several dozen journalists boarded an Air France Jumbo Jet for Tehran, despite threats by the Iranian government to shoot it down.

The volunteer crew had taken on twice the normal load of fuel in case they were forced to turn back. The plane had to circle for more than half an hour over Tehran while final negotiations for permission to land were conducted.

A crowd estimated at more than one million people was waiting to greet the revolution's spiritual leader as the Air France steward helped him down the gangway at Mehrabad Airport.

Ten days later, the remnants of the Shah's last government under the hapless Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar were swept away in street battles.

The Middle East was never the same again.

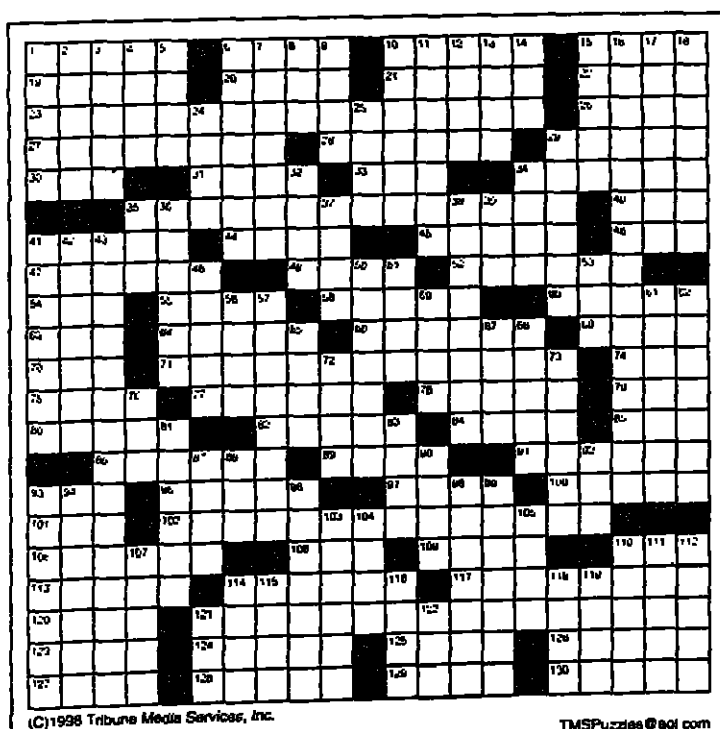


The Saturday Crossword

NOT THE PRESIDENTS

By Josiah Breward, Scranton, Pennsylvania

- ACROSS
- Enlighten
 - Lambaste
 - Rise up
 - Quintessential
 - Taylor of "The Navy"
 - Sacred
 - Type of orange
 - Great philosopher, Zeno of
 - PERCE
 - Burst into flames
 - Completely
 - Crustacean hats
 - Unit of magnetic flux density
 - Compass rose
 - Kharidun's river
 - Acres Ruby
 - As cold as a
 - GRAAT
 - Chemical suffix
 - Shades of purple
 - Organized record
 - "NYPD Blue" co-star Jimmy
 - Scout
 - hemisphere nat.
 - Doing the same old same old
 - Slad elements
 - Blind drunk
 - Pace question
 - Wind organ
 - Anesthetic
 - Processes flour
 - Inhabitant of salt
 - Molasses and Felipe
 - of baseball
 - Cybernetic
 - US tennis stadium
 70. ... Relief, CA
 - FORD
 - Broadway smash
 - Power current
 - "The Merchant of Venice" lady
 - Spanish dialectal mark
 - Q-Q connection
 - Palm-faces encounters
 - African-American equality sym.
 - Bomb type
 - Shoshone
 - Whitewater
 - Elevator man?
 - Deft
 - Printer's measures
 - Setting feature
 - Flakey beauty
 - Sniffers



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- DOWN
- Bombard and others
 - Bargains
 - Braided linen tape
 - Supporting pieces
 - Slangy idiom
 - County cop
 - Marilyn's "blonde" part?
 - Presidential candidate London
 - Advice-column acronym
 - Lon, at times
 - Values highly
 - Enticement
 - Inspirations of individualists
 - Thriller writer
 - Design
 - Medieval stringed instrument
 - BUSH
 - Pagan hawk
 - Cur-all
 - Quaker William
 - Make over
 - Secret meetings
 - Stanley Gardner
 - Palo ... CA
 - Sedan or SUV, e.g.
 - Eyelike
 - Outdoor gala
 - Food of the gods
 - Almer
 - Acts as the go-between
 - Put on the hard drive
 - WASHINGTON
 - Dutch flower
 - Magnifico

- Skedaddel
- Spanish bunt
- Porto ... Benin
- One of the Channel Isles
- In the past, in the past
- Bloom on a tree
- Small sofas
- Mile, from Madrid
- Daria deposit
- Stems of bamboo
- Not sideways
- Fantasia farewell
- Zodiac sign
- Tax adviser abbr.
- Emmy spots
- Pocketed broad?
- Egyptian fertility goddess
- Put on the hard drive
- Spring fwd. system
- Practical sci. class
- Department store on Fifth Avenue
- Leader of the Three Stooges
- Erik of "Cippi"
- Deserved
- Language
- Associated
- German
- Just about
- Like delicate fabric
- Paper quantity
- Stems of bamboo
- Shoot from hiding
- World supporter?
- Highlanders
- Attract
- Egrets
- Queen's sister
- Yearn
- Son of Adam
- Practical sci. class
- Mentalist Celler

Israeli entrepreneur seeks energy in the waves

By Jennifer Friedlin
Reuters

ISRAEL IS not known for its abundant natural resources, but entrepreneur Shmuel Ovadia says he has invented a way to turn the waves along the country's coastline into electric energy.

Ovadia, chief executive of S.D.E. Energy & Desalination Ltd, said his U.S.-patented pneumatic wave energy converter exploits the intrinsic power and nature of the sea to create an environment-friendly and cheap energy alternative.

"For this system you just need the sea and waves," said Ovadia at port of Jaffa, where a prototype of his wave energy converter has been installed.

Standing on top of the port's sea defence wall, Ovadia, a 46-year-old wood manufacturer who did his army service in the engineer corps, points to two green metal buoys bobbing in the water below.

As the waves force the buoys up and down, they activate pistons that, working on hydraulic oil, power a motor which drives an electric generator located in a small, obscure shack behind the sea wall.

Ovadia said his wave energy converter is different from the 50 or so other systems developed worldwide because it exploits the underlying force of the wave and not just its height.

The prototype, which occupies only five metres of beach front, would be able to generate up to 40 kilowatts of electricity a day, but Ovadia said he could build a plant which would create up to four megawatts a day.

That would be enough to light up a village of 40,000 households with a source of power that would cost less than \$0.02 per kilowatt — a fraction of what it costs to produce energy from coal, gas or oil.

Although the system is suited only to beach-front communities that have constant exposure to waves, Ovadia said the device would be ideal for undeveloped locales.

"We are speaking about a small system for areas in the Third World where there is no electricity," he said. "The idea is to help the Third World with a cheap, efficient and easy way to set up an electricity source." And Ovadia's system offers another added attraction. As a by-product, a four megawatt system can desalinate up to 500 cubic metres of drinking water an hour, he said.

Sound too good to be true? Scientists and engineers familiar with Ovadia's project admit the idea seems like a pipe dream, but they quickly add that the wave energy converter has potential.

"Surprisingly, this system works," said Tzur Naaman, a power and lighting engineer who served as an

advisor to S.D.E.

Orna Berry, Israel's chief scientist, said that although Ovadia's project has certain structural faults her office contributed \$100,000 towards funding the project because of its promise.

"I would classify S.D.E. as being very far from commercialisation, but their value shot up because some U.S. states are saying that by 2000 a certain percentage of energy must come from alternative sources," she said.

The port city of Ashdod has also granted Ovadia a site to build a four megawatt station.

The only problem now is cash. Except for the chief scientist, Ovadia has not succeeded in drawing investors.

He said he is now considering floating shares in S.D.E. on a stock exchange in order to raise the \$3.5 million to \$4.0 million needed to get the Ashdod plant up and running.

Ovadia has also launched a marketing blitz trying to convince some 300 potential investors, including the World Bank, that his project is not just a waste of energy.

"We think this is a very serious project, but not everyone does," Ovadia said.

Industrial powers differ on reform of global financial system

DAVOS, Switzerland (AFP) — Financial leaders of the major industrial powers agreed here on Friday on the need for swift action to reform the global financial system to cope with global financial crises, but differed on how this should be achieved.

While economic officials agreed that the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrial nations must share the burden of keeping the world economy on track, they were less unanimous on how to achieve this, and on how far they should go in efforts to limit fluctuations between the dollar, the yen and the euro.

British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown called at the World Economic Forum annual gathering here for a "decision by the summer" on a new system for "crisis prevention and resolution" which should be in place this year.

French Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said he hoped that at a G-7 finance ministers' meeting in February "we will be able to make the decisions

we really need" on organization and regulation of the global economic and financial system.

Brown said that "we should recognise that we have a global ... financial system," and acknowledged the need for a new global standing committee for regular and consistent surveillance.

"My proposals for moving forward this year are a form of burden sharing," Brown said, stressing the need for the European Union, the United States and Japan "all of us, and I stress all of us, playing our part in moving forward with the international economic reforms that we should now make."

Strauss-Kahn called for a "commitment by G-7 members to strengthen their cooperation by even more frequent meetings, systematic coordination."

He also said that the "three poles" of the world monetary system, Japan, the United States and the European Union, should meet to discuss the situations of the dollar, the yen

and the euro.

"Even though a target zone system or something like it" to limit fluctuations between the three currencies "is not really possible now," Strauss-Kahn said, there was a need for a new commitment to more cooperation, including between the 11 countries of the euro zone.

But U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers was less enthusiastic both on the speed at which decisions needed to be taken on reforms of the international financial system, and the necessity of tighter G-7 cooperation.

Summers said that while cooperation and coordination between the G-7 countries was desirable, "I would record some scepticism about the view that merely more frequent or improved statements by ministers or government would serve by themselves to stabilise exchange rates."

He also warned against the view that national monetary policies "rather than being addressed to national objectives ... should instead

be addressed to other international objectives."

European Central Bank (ECB) President Wim Duisenberg also rejected the idea of a fixed exchange rate objective for the euro, but said this "does not imply that the euro-dollar rate will be neglected. It does not imply that it will be unstable or volatile."

The ECB is not "opposed to reasonably stable exchange rates ... quite the contrary," Duisenberg said. Japanese vice-minister of finance for international affairs Eisuke Sakakibara agreed it was "important to proceed speedily on the issue of a new international financial architecture."

But he warned that "the basic cause of the crisis has not been eliminated," and said moves must be made to monitor and possibly undertake the "prudent regulation" of the huge amounts of capital moving round the world, how to handle exchange rates and the possible creation of a "lender of last resort" if globalisation was to work. Sakakibara said the yen at

its current level enables Japanese exporters to be competitive.

The yen's rate at above 130-140 to the dollar late last year was the result of extremely short positions taken by investors such as hedge funds at the height of concern over the Japanese economy. Sakakibara told the World Economic Forum here.

But "the financial crisis is about to be over and the rate has returned to its pre-crisis level," Sakakibara said.

"At the current level of 115-116, many Japanese exporters are quite competitive."

He also said he "would not be that optimistic on the real side of the economy for 1999," but "I think I could say that by the middle of 99 the Japanese economy will bottom out."

"There are some indications that October-December gross national product figures for '98 may be zero or slightly positive, but I don't know whether that will be continued into the January-March period," he

added.

It takes time for confidence to be restored," Sakakibara said. "I think it will take some time for the real economy to bounce back."

Summers said he was not sure there were any "easy answers" to the problems facing the international financial system although they were "very fundamental issues that will require close attention from the international community over the next year."

"The most important thing is that we have a coordinated approach and ... develop strategies to deal with this kind of problem," said German Deputy Finance Minister Heine Flassbeck.

German President Roman Herzog opened the global business summit on Thursday by demanding tougher international regulation of financial markets to curb volatility and restore trust in capitalism.

"Guardrails around the markets are needed here to prevent panicked reactions and create confidence in the

reliability of markets," he told the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in the Swiss Alpine resort of Davos, citing recent market turmoil.

Echoing calls from Germany's new centre-left government for more stability on foreign exchange markets, Herzog urged rich nations' governments and central banks to coordinate economic policy more closely to foster growth and avoid currency swings.

"The European and Japanese concepts on stabilising the exchange rates among euro, dollar and yen should not be rejected out of hand as dogmatic heresy," he said in an apparent swipe at the more laissez-faire United States.

U.S. officials have played down the need for any kind of target zones for currencies that proponents say could help block huge and often damaging flows of capital.

U.S. economist Fred Bergsten, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said that target zones between major currencies

were needed to maintain a background of financial stability for the global financial system.

He expected the dollar to fall in 1999 with potentially serious consequences for the world economy.

"One of the major global economic events of 1999 is likely to be a sharp decline in the exchange rate of the dollar," Bergsten wrote in a paper he presented on Friday.

He said fundamental equilibrium rates calculated by the Institute for International Economics which he heads suggested the euro should trade between \$1.25 and \$1.30, up from current levels around \$1.14.

The same fundamentals suggested a rate of one dollar to 100 yen. That compared with 116.60 on Thursday.

But because market rates typically overshoot, "the dollar could depreciate well beyond these levels in its initial fall," he said, noting any such move could hurt Japan's growth and increase unemployment in Europe.

U.S. pushes for change at IMF

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is pushing for key changes at the IMF after the financial crises roiling world markets last year helped build momentum for reform, a top U.S. official has said.

"The global economy has changed greatly in

recent years, and the IMF has to change with it," Deputy U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers told a U.S. Senate panel.

He said the United States has pressed successfully for some reforms at the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) and would continue to press for more.

"I have no doubt that without an IMF ... the costs of these crises would have been even higher and the impact on our own economy and markets much more severe," he said.

However, "to say that

the IMF is indispensable is not to say we should be entirely happy with the IMF we have today," he said.

Summers called for more transparency at the IMF and said it must work with others in the international community to ensure that the private sector shares more in the costs of financial crises.

The United States is also pressing the IMF to cooperate better with the World Bank, Summers said, so that IMF programmes are less likely to suffer from lack of attention to the social and political challenges faced in borrower countries.

"Sound macroeconomic policies are important, but they are far from sufficient," he said.

The IMF has been criticised for pressuring borrower countries to raise interest rates in order to attract capital and thus remain capable of making debt payments.

High interest rates can carry the risk of pushing an economy into recession.

The recession gripping Asia and the financial crisis that spread to Russia and Brazil in recent months prompted calls for a broader IMF focus on including private bank lenders and investors in efforts to preempt turmoil in emerging markets.

Summers said the United States had successfully lobbied for the IMF to continue and extend its key policy of lending to countries even when they are in arrears on debt payments to private creditors.

Such a policy can be "a useful signal to private creditors that encourages them to share the burden of economic adjustment," he said.

In this way, private creditors cannot indulge in imprudent loans, he stressed.

Exchange Rates		Thursday, 28-01-99		ACCESS 4446868	
CURRENCY	JORDAN DINA	SAUDI RIAL	U.A.E. DIRH	BAHRAIN DINA	OMAN RIAL
JORDAN DINA	1.0000	0.1827	1.8778	1.8388	0.1844
SAUDI RIAL	5.2976	1.0000	1.0209	9.9478	9.7416
U.A.E. DIRH	5.1853	0.9798	1.0000	9.7443	9.5924
BAHRAIN DINA	0.5235	0.1025	0.1025	1.0000	1.0723
OMAN RIAL	0.5438	0.1027	0.1048	1.0212	1.0000
QATAR RIAL	5.1434	0.9709	0.9812	9.6581	9.4580
KUWAIT DINA	0.4276	0.0807	0.0824	0.8030	0.7853
EGYPT POUND	4.8145	0.0086	0.0278	8.0407	8.8533
LIBANON LIRA	21.4831	0.0552	4.1399	40.5405	38.5044
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2698	0.2722	2.8522	2.9875
GERMAN MARK	0.5577	0.1019	0.1053	1.8105	1.8772
FRANCE FRANC	2.1116	0.4552	0.4647	4.5284	4.4348
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.9866	0.3750	0.3828	3.7304	3.6531
ITALY LIRA	8.0880	1.5267	1.5586	15.1875	14.8727
JAPAN YEN	1.6295	0.3078	0.3140	3.0599	2.9955
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.7172	0.5129	0.5238	5.1023	4.9968
NEW ZEALAND DOL	10.8919	2.0565	2.0888	20.4527	20.0258
FINLAND MARKKA	23.8747	4.5067	4.6008	44.8315	43.9023
BELGIUM FRANC	49.7400	9.3882	9.5852	93.4010	91.4651
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	13.7615	2.5456	2.6234	26.2314	25.2574
CYPRUS POUND	3.9660	0.7488	0.7643	7.4472	7.2928
GREECE DRACHMA	2.8836	0.5088	0.5171	5.0393	4.9348
SPAIN PESSETA	16.6687	3.2027	3.2898	31.8597	31.1994
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1459	0.4053	0.4137	4.0314	3.9478
RUSSIA RUBLE	1.2330	0.2328	0.2378	2.3154	2.2874

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINA

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	SAUDI RIAL	U.A.E. DIRH	BAHRAIN DINA	OMAN RIAL	QATAR RIAL	KUWAIT DINA	EGYPT POUND	LIBANON LIRA	FINLAND MARKKA	ITALY LIRA	FRANCE FRANC	GERMAN MARK	SWITZERLAND FRA	NETHERLAND G.	NEW ZEALAND DOL	FINLAND MARKKA	RUSSIA RUBLE
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.6458	0.5857	0.7110	0.1746	0.8868	0.5198	0.5180	1.4555	0.8572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572
EURO	0.6072	1.0000	0.3557	0.4317	0.1080	0.5283	0.3158	0.3124	0.8556	1.7074	2.6117	1.0000	1.2138	0.2892	1.4789	0.8875	10.1010	1.9088	0.0572
SAUDI RIAL	1.7074	2.6117	1.0000	1.2138	0.2892	1.4789	0.8875	10.1010	1.9088	4.0885	6.7263	2.3162	2.8238	0.7238	2.2181	0.7311	8.3209	1.6111	0.0572
U.A.E. DIRH	0.7110	1.0710	0.4317	1.0000	0.2456	1.2181	0.7311	8.3209	1.6111	15.5700	24.7500	9.4301	11.5700	3.7500	12.0000	11.5700	13.1150	0.0572	0.0572
BAHRAIN DINA	0.1746	0.2892	0.2892	1.0000	0.3380	1.8675	1.0000	11.3812	2.2037	6.7263	10.6903	4.0885	5.0393	4.9348	6.8841	4.0885	45.6214	8.8335	0.0572
OMAN RIAL	0.8868	1.4789	1.4789	1.2181	1.0000	14.6514	8.7864	1.0000	19.3827	35.2159	55.9702	23.1593	28.5243	28.3378	40.3378	28.3378	33.7818	0.0572	0.0572
QATAR RIAL	0.5198	0.8556	0.8556	0.7238	0.7238	1.0000	0.8297	9.4430	1.8284	10.6903	16.6687	6.7263	8.3209	8.3209	11.5700	11.5700	13.1150	0.0572	0.0572
KUWAIT DINA	0.5180	0.8556	0.8556	0.7238	0.7238	1.0000	0.8297	9.4430	1.8284	6.7263	10.6903	4.0885	5.0393	4.9348	6.8841	4.0885	45.6214	8.8335	0.0572
EGYPT POUND	1.4555	2.2037	2.2037	11.3812	2.2037	1.0000	0.8297	9.4430	1.8284	35.2159	55.9702	23.1593	28.5243	28.3378	40.3378	28.3378	33.7818	0.0572	0.0572
LIBANON LIRA	0.8572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
FINLAND MARKKA	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
ITALY LIRA	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
FRANCE FRANC	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
GERMAN MARK	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
SWITZERLAND FRA	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
NETHERLAND G.	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
NEW ZEALAND DOL	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
FINLAND MARKKA	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000	1.0000
RUSSIA RUBLE	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	0.0572	1.0000

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1 Med. school subject
5 Tennis star
10 Swine
14 Feeble
15 Came up
16 Cross
17 Aristocracy
18 Oklahoma city
20 Overcame
21 Upper-arm
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23 Opinion page,
briefly
24 Rabbit, to
greyhounds
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33 Cursor starter?
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da
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39 Transfer image
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superior
43 Inclinations
44 Actress Flusso
45 Debacle
47 Celestial
angels
51 Solitary
52 British
Commons
54 "Diane" singer
55 Liqueur flavor
56 Eye covetously
57 Attention-
getting sound
58 Sire
59 Welsh symbol

6 Made a goof
7 Too colorful
8 Road curve
9 Unanticipated
delay
10 Elements
11 Quaid movie
12 Handhold
13 Caesar and
Vicious
18 Force back
22 Chills
24 French lathers
25 Of an ancient
alphabet
26 Japanese bay
27 Islands off
North Carolina
28 Fill an empty
flat
29 Bombard and
others
30 Distributed
cards
32 Overly devout
35 Where snaps
are developed
36 Population's
potential for
diversity

38 Out of
(discordant)
39 Woman in the
kitchen?
41 Usher in after
intermission
42 Weasel's kin
44 Singer
Della
45 Flutter
46 Charged
particles
47 Deep draft
48 Overwhelming
49 Man or Wight,
e.g.
50 Submissive
53 Individual

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Need for housing estimated to have risen to 38,000 units each year

ACCORDING to a latest study prepared by the society of investors in the housing sector, the need for housing has increased to 38,000 units each year due to population growth, which is among the highest in the world, and the waves of immigration to Jordan. Consequently, and in the light of the housing problem in the Kingdom, the society has asked the government to cancel all the measures that hinder investments in this sector and to enact the necessary and appropriate laws to encourage it.

"To consolidate the role of this sector in production and financing, after the establishment of the Jordan Mortgage Refinance Company, it is imperative to expand the lending system in order to secure housing loans to low income groups taking into consideration long periods of repayment," the society said. "Such expansion in financing on easy terms would allow the private sector at the end to set up housing projects for low-income groups while leaving the field open for demand/supply/competition factors to meet the housing needs of all social groups."

The society stressed that in order to improve the efficiency of the real estate market and to reactivate or revitalise this important sector, the need arises for government intervention to support the less fortunate families by providing them with suitable housing units through a number of measures. Most importantly, the study proposed lowering the taxes and fees on building materials as they (taxes

and fees) were found to account for 30 per cent of the real estate cost.

Other recommendations sought lowering the high 10 per cent tax of the total estimated value of the lands or real estate and exempting the investors from paying real estate tax on buildings constructed for sale. The society complained that the 10 per cent tax should be paid upon each sale deal and suggested that a mechanism be set up whereby the tax would not be required if a number of deals took place on a certain property within a specified period.

The society proposed amending the rent law so as there would be no more barriers for investments in housing for rent purposes. Noting that it takes about 60 days for an investor to obtain approvals starting from the day of purchasing the land until receiving the licences, the society asked for simplifying the measures for setting up housing projects. In addition, the society highlighted the importance of providing the necessary infrastructure in the areas where such services are at a low level.

Finally, the study called for amending building requirements to correspond with the high prices of land at present. The study noted that multi-storey buildings would minimise housing costs, allow for the best usage of land and lessen the cost burden on the government from having to provide the infrastructure services (Al Arab Al Yawm).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The moon's transit through Leo this weekend recharges you with boundless enthusiasm. You could run, or you could ride a bike or motorcycle, just as long as it gets you moving and away from a building full of pre-breathed air and cities straining to see past their own smog. What are you waiting for? Get going!

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Looks like there's some controversy at home. One person wants things one way, another insists it won't work. You may have to come up with a compromise. This is surprising, since you usually have a firm opinion. But this situation isn't quite as important to you as it is to the others, so you can be a little more flexible. Let them lead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Gemini is the sign of the perpetual student, and today you'll find lots to learn. These are not the kinds of things you can get out of books, though. If you're like most Geminis, you tend to get stuck in your head. Today, get out into the real world. Roller-blade to work, or something similarly adventurous. It's time to get your senses stirred.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) This starts out a dreamy, cuddly kind of day, excellent for non-verbal communication with a person you know well and would like to know even better. Just follow your intuition, and your heart. Once you have a deep understanding, you'll weather any storm. That's good, because a couple of squalls could come up later in the day.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) The pieces of the puzzle are starting to fall together, and everything suddenly makes sense. You may still lack a few items to build what you envision, but don't worry, you'll find them soon. Its always easier to see what the other person is missing, and that's the case today. Someone else will point out whatever you've overlooked.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) The problems you've been dealing with lately are still there. They're not going anywhere, so you can relax. And you can tell that to anyone who leans on the today and tries to get you to move faster. Actually, you can move with the speed of light when you feel like it, but today you just might not. Set your own pace.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You're the one people go to when they can't

get along with each other. You have a knack for this. Yours is the sign of the moderator, the counselor and the diplomat. You help people calm down by listening to them carefully, no matter how bizarre their ideas. The challenge, again, is to get them to see from the other person's point of view.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) Somebody wants to take centre stage, and might even shove you out of the way to get there. Don't put up a fuss. You might pretend to be dismayed, but truth be known, you're secretly delighted. With good reason. This person is going to have to take the brunt of the criticism, and it'll be substantial. Try not to let anyone catch you chuckling.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Travel is a Sagittarian obsession, and you'd probably do it every minute if you could. In fact, many Sagittarians work in the airline industry, or drive buses or trucks, so they're always on the move. This weekend is good for travel, but it's also good for studying, and there's lots you want to learn. Take the time, so you can read while you're moving.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Before you entrust your money to somebody else, make sure you know how its going to be spent. How much of your charitable contribution goes to fancy salaries for staff? There could be a discrepancy between what you think you're getting, and what's actually happening. Check your insurance coverage too, while you're at it.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You're probably in the mood to be eloquent today, and well you might. Quite a few people out there could use a little of your wisdom. Unfortunately, they don't seem to realise how wise you are; they keep wanting to argue with you. Show them by not only proving your point, but also listening to theirs. That'll take them by surprise!

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) A minor altercation could turn into a knockdown, drag-out fight, and you don't want to get involved. Doesn't look like its any of your business or your problem. So if you notice a couple of beefy types starting to get belligerent, give them plenty of room. If you have an opinion, keep it to yourself. No point in wasting it.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Trading rises but prices weaken at AFM

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) recorded a tangible increase last week amid speculations that concerns for His Majesty King Hussein's health would continue to affect trading on the stock market next week, a broker said Friday.

According to the AFM's weekly bulletin, turnover amounted to JD16 million during the five-day trading period compared to the JD11.1 million posted during the one-day trading in the previous

week. The bulletin indicated that the price index slipped to 175.5 from 176.03 points in the previous week.

The industrial sector recorded a 3.3 point increase while other sectors registered declines in share price, the bulletin showed.

The industrial sector ranked first with a turnover of JD10.6 million, or 66.3 per cent of the total, followed by the banking sector which accounted for JD3.3 million, 20.6 per cent.

The services sector's share of the total was JD2 million,

or 12.5 per cent and finally the insurance sector trailed with only JD100,000.

Naim Naqeb, a broker, said trading at the AFM was very active in the beginning of the week but was affected later by the return of the King to Mayo Clinic.

"Investors will watch the situation carefully and wait for news about the King's health before they undertake any activity on the floor this week," Naqeb told the Jordan Times.

He noted that trading last week focused on the mining and pharmaceutical compa-

nies. The cement and potash shares gained 19.2 per cent and 10.4 per cent of the turnover respectively. The Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company's share of the turnover amounted to 13.7 per cent.

Arab Bank, the major blue-chip, registered JD2.4 million in trading volume but its share price declined by JD4 on concern about the King's health.

The Housing Bank ranked second with a turnover amounting to JD454,158, but also its share price dropped by five per cent, the bulletin

showed.

Trading in the service sector focused on the Jordan Electric Power Company with a turnover of JD1.4 million.

The Parallel market's share of the turnover amounted to JD847,602 where the bulk of this figure was registered by the Union Investment company.

Out of the 80 firms that changed hands on the floor, 28 companies recorded increases in their prices, 40 registered declines while 12 firms witnessed no change in their prices.

Ford pays \$6.5b for Volvo cars in global fight for power

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Volvo has agreed to sell its car division to Ford of the United States for about 5.6 billion euros, the two groups said Thursday, marking a giant step in a global fight for market share and putting Scania in the front line.

The Volvo name is to be shared between the two groups.

The announcement was made against a background of months of rumours and reports of negotiations between many leading auto groups, notably in Europe, and might cause some soul-searching in Sweden where Volvo cars strike a chord of national identity.

Ford has been reported to be in talks with BMW of Germany and Japanese Honda.

The sale, for 50 billion Swedish kronor or about \$6.5 billion, is conditional on Volvo shareholders' as well as customary regulatory approval.

Shortly after the announcement, sources close to Fiat in Turin said that the Italian group had made an unsuccessful bid for the hand of the entire Volvo company.

And the parent Volvo company immediately reaffirmed here that it was interested in a merger or links with the Swedish truck manufacturer Scania.

Brokers said that the market would now expect Volvo to use the cash from Ford to make a full bid for Scania, of which it acquired 13 per cent two weeks ago.

"There will definitely be a bid for Scania by Volvo now. This deal means Volvo has enough cash and so there is nothing to stop it from going ahead," one broker said.

Immediately after the announcement Volvo signalled interest in a full merger

with Scania. Analysts said the sale of the car division would provide Volvo with enough cash to place an outright bid.

The Volvo share price rose 3.5 per cent to 220.50 kronor in early trading, while Scania shares jumped by 6.8 per cent to 252 kronor.

One analyst said: "If Volvo doesn't manage to buy up Scania, then there are many other options within the construction equipment segment and in the North American truck industry for example."

"Volvo will have about 50-60 billion kronor in cash, and together with loans it will probably command over a purchasing sum of about 80-100 billion kronor, which is definitely enough to buy something fairly big in the North American truck industry," he said.

Volvo Chairman Haakan Frisinger said of the deal with Ford: "This is a solution which strongly enhances both the prospects for Volvo cars, its employees and for the Volvo Group as a whole."

Analysts here said Ford was a good match for Volvo which would benefit from Ford's research and development, and also gain full access to the U.S. market.

Volvo was seen as adding quality brand needed by Ford between its luxury Jaguars, and smaller Fords on the hard-fought European market.

The Volvo line would compete more with Saab which is part owned by GM.

In Detroit, Michigan, the president of Ford Motor Company, Jacques Nasser, said: "Volvo is a premium automotive brand with unique appeal that represents a good opportunity to profitably extend our lineup and grow the Ford business worldwide."

Referring to a reputation that Volvo cars are tough and safe, he described Volvo as "a perfect complement to the Ford family."

Ford would take ownership of all of Volvo's cars facilities worldwide, including three major assembly plants and two powertrain plants in Europe and Volvo's passenger vehicle product development centre at Gothenburg, Sweden.

Volvo, after disposing of Volvo cars, its biggest business, is to concentrate on its commercial products and related businesses, including trucks, buses, construction equipment and marine engines, Volvo said.

Swedish Rapport television news, quoting sources close to the deal, said that Fiat of Italy had offered more than Ford for Volvo but had demanded that the Heavy Trucks division be included in the deal.

There has been speculation for months about a full or part sale of Volvo. Ford, Fiat, Volkswagen of Germany and U.S. General Motors (GM) had been mentioned as potential bidders.

Ford has informed Volvo that Volvo Cars will continue to be managed from Gothenburg.

"Volvo Cars' future prospects will, by being an important part of one of the world's largest and most profitable groups, improve considerably," Volvo Chief Executive Leif Johansson said.

Volvo Car's President Tuve Johansson is to remain in his position.

Volvo will continue to use its own name for commercial products, and Ford will have the right to use it for passenger cars, minivans, sports utility vehicles and light trucks.

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COMPANY	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
BANKS			
ARAB BK	217.000	212.000	-1.84%
HBL BK	1.250	1.210	-3.20%
JR. OF JO	1.320	1.190	-9.85%
MODEL EAST BK	1.030	1.020	-0.97%
INDUSTRIAL DEV BK	1.440	1.510	+4.86%
THE HOUSING BK	2.780	2.700	-2.88%
JQ. KUWAIT BK	1.670	1.650	-1.20%
JQ. ISLAMIC BK	1.800	1.800	0.00%
UNION BK	1.100	1.050	-4.55%
JQ. INVEST AFRI BK	1.520	1.540	+1.32%
BEIT ELMAL	0.960	0.980	+2.08%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.550	0.520	-5.45%
BANKS INDEX			
	278.270		-1.72%
INSURANCE			
ARABIAN SEAS INS	1.050	1.060	+0.95%
JQ. FRENCH INS	2.700	2.720	+0.74%
ARAB INS	1.820	1.800	-1.10%
ANLIAS INS	1.160	1.080	-6.90%
INSURANCE INDEX			
	128.010		-0.28%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.730	1.680	-2.90%
WPP ELECTRICITY	1.710	1.730	+1.17%
VEHICLES OWNERS	2.880	2.890	+0.35%
PORTFOLIO SECURITY	0.810	0.800	-1.23%
JQ. INTL TRADING CE	0.270	0.280	+3.70%
AL-BAT	1.400	1.400	0.00%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.900	0.900	0.00%
ARAB INTL FOR INVER	1.850	1.820	-1.62%
UNION LAND DEV	0.570	0.570	0.00%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.180	1.120	-5.09%
SERVICES INDEX			
	110.300		-0.97%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	2.450	2.600	+6.10%
PHOSPHATE	1.880	2.050	+9.04%
ARAB POTASH	3.570	3.780	+5.88%
PETROLEUM REFINER	10.540	10.590	+0.47%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRI	1.080	1.050	-2.78%
WORSTED MILLS	5.470	5.550	+1.46%
ARAB PHARMACEUT	2.850	2.860	+0.35%
CERAMIC IND	1.110	1.170	+5.41%
JQ. DARY	2.800	2.880	+2.86%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.220	1.200	-1.64%
JQ. PIPES	1.080	1.080	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETE	7.050	7.020	-0.43%
NTL STEEL	0.500	0.500	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5.160	5.230	+1.36%
MODEL EAST COMPLE	0.580	0.580	0.00%
JQ. STEEL	0.850	0.820	-3.53%
ARAB ALUMINUM	1.850	1.800	-2.70%
CHLORINE	1.230	1.250	+1.63%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.420	0.420	0.00%
NTL IND	0.320	0.320	0.00%
PETRO-CHEMICAL	0.830	1.000	+20.48%
CHEMICAL & VEGETA	0.830	1.000	+20.48%
ROCKWELL	0.280	0.280	0.00%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.010	1.000	-0.99%
NTL CABLE	0.640	0.620	-3.13%
SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	0.380	0.370	-2.63%
ARAB CENTER FOR PH	1.300	1.250	-3.85%
TEL-ZAY	0.300	0.300	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN I	0.680	0.680	0.00%
IND. RESOURCES	0.450	0.440	-2.22%
NEW CAPES	0.630	0.600	-4.76%
NTL ALUMINUM	0.700	0.700	0.00%
INDUSTRY INDEX			
	80.230		+3.83%
PARALLEL			
EXPORT BK (S)	0.890	0.900	+1.12%
ARAB GERMAN INS	1.000	1.000	0.00%
JQ. TRADING FACILITE	0.410	0.400	-2.44%
UNION INVER. CORP	0.710	0.630	-11.27%
AL-EKHAL	0.780	0.800	+2.56%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
AL-SHARQ	1.030	1.000	-2.91%
ARMAN INS	0.820	0.870	+6.10%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.380	0.400	+5.26%
AL DAWLARI	0.580	0.580	0.00%
ARAB INVESTORS	0.580	0.580	0.00%
ARAB INTL TRADE	0.210	0.210	0.00%
MACHINERY EQUIP	0.470	0.450	-4.26%
OPTICAL & AUDIAL	0.430	0.410	-4.65%
CENTURY	1.280	1.290	+0.78%
NAMCO	0.250	0.240	-4.00%
UNION EAST PY (AR)	0.870	0.850	-2.31%
UNION TOBACCO	2.000	2.000	0.00%
AL-RAZI	0.540	0.580	+7.41%
UNION ENG. IND	0.200	0.220	+10.00%
INTL CERAMIC	0.580	0.600	+3.45%
NTL DARY	0.720	0.720	0.00%
GRAND INDEX			
	175.54		-0.28%

Over 80 per cent of bosses optimistic for growth — study

DAVOS, Switzerland (AFP) — More than 80 per cent of senior company chiefs worldwide are optimistic about their firm's growth prospects in the next three years, according to a survey published Thursday.

Even in Asia, where last year's financial crisis is still producing ripples, 70 per cent of bosses are confident, according to the survey by consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers.

"Pervasive optimism among chief executive officers signals that there will be little reluctance to make the investments necessary

to fuel growth," said PriceWaterhouseCoopers CEO James J. Schiro.

Top business leaders see the development of electronic commerce as a key priority for their companies, according to the survey launched at the study at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

About a fifth of those questioned believe that electronic commerce will generate some 20 per cent of their turnover within five years, it reported, also noting widespread belief that

the U.S. technological supremacy will have disappeared in the same period.

"What we are seeing in the global e-business arena is not merely evolution, but revolution: A new way of doing business, driven by new technologies including the Internet, resulting in new value propositions in many industries," said Schiro.

The study was based on questioning of some 800 senior company chiefs in north America, Asia, Europe and Latin America between July and September 1998.

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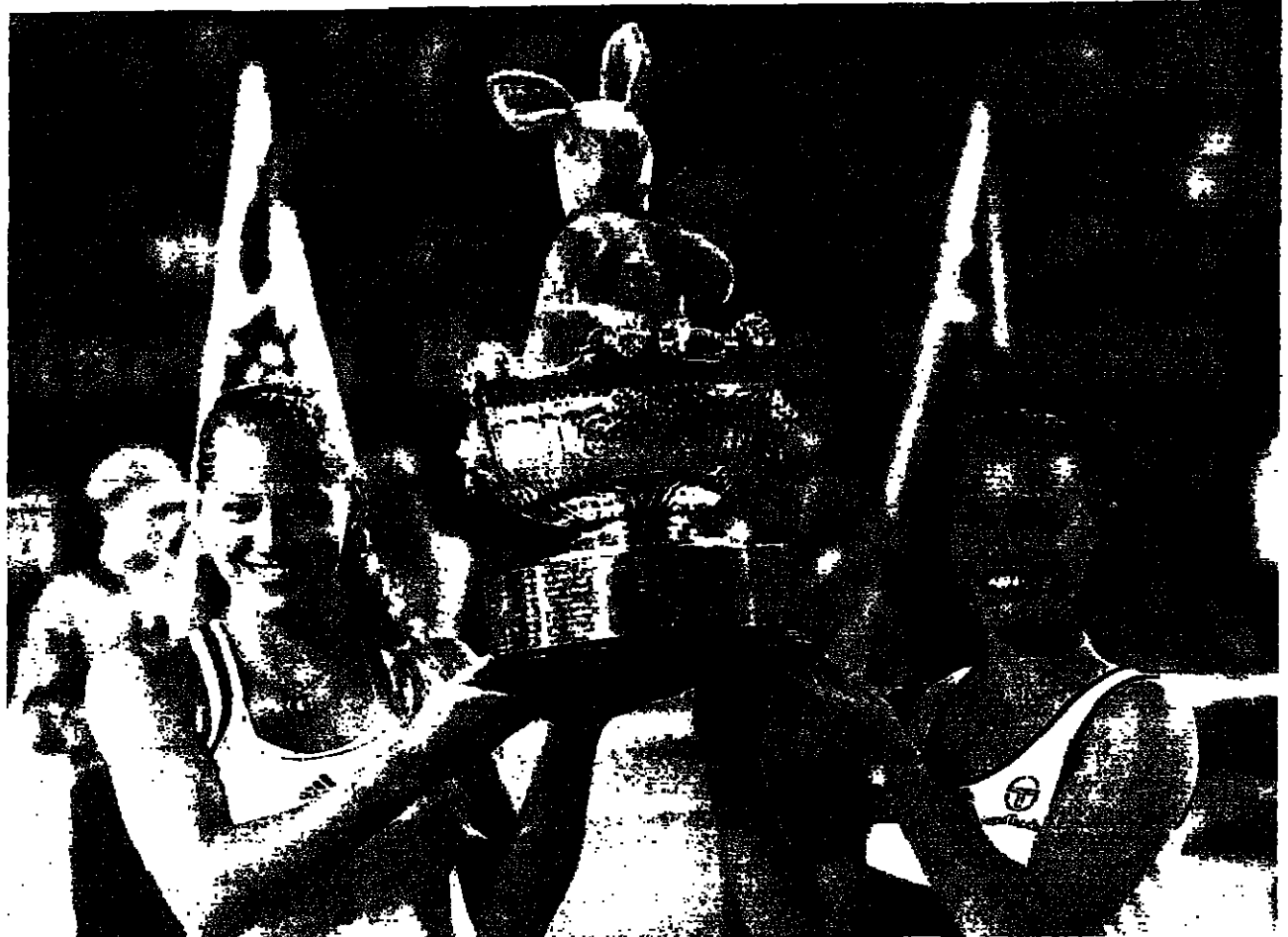
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Kafelnikov downs Haas to reach Open final



Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia on left shakes hands with Tommy Haas of Germany after their semifinal match at the Australian Open Tennis Championships, Melbourne, Australia, Friday. Kafelnikov won the match 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 (AP photo)



Martina Hingis of Switzerland, right, poses with her doubles partner Anna Kournikova of Russia after they won the doubles final by 7-5, 6-3, over Lindsay Davenport, USA and Natasha Zvereva at the Australian Open Tennis Championships, Melbourne, Australia, Friday (AP photo)

MELBOURNE (R) — Yevgeny Kafelnikov routed Germany's Tommy Haas 6-3 6-4 7-5 on Friday to spare the 1999 Australian Open a dubious place in tennis history.

Tenth seed Kafelnikov brushed aside the 20-year-old German in a 113-minute semifinal to rule out the prospect of the first unseeded men's singles final in the Open era.

The Russian, however, quickly claimed in-form Thomas Enqvist would start Sunday's final as favourite after the icy Swede won two Open warm-up tournaments and beat two seeds — including twice U.S. Open winner Pat Rafter — in the early rounds here.

"Hopefully I will get my chances but I feel like I'm definitely the underdog," Kafelnikov, the 1996 French Open champion, said.

Saturday's women's final will also see a seeded player meet an unseeded opponent, although that match has been overshadowed by an off-court spat over comments by the world's leading two players about unseeded finalist Amelie Mauresmo of France.

Defending champion Martina Hingis, who faces Mauresmo in the final, was reported to have said at a German-language news conference on Thursday that the powerfully-built French teenager was "half a man". German reporters said Hingis's exact words

were: "Sie ist ein halber Mann." But Hingis denied on Friday she had ever made the remark.

"A half-man? Who would say that?" Hingis said. "She's a girl, she's playing tennis...very good and I have to beat her on court, not somewhere else."

Hingis, who earlier won her fifth successive grand slam doubles title, said she had been talking about Mauresmo's style of play.

World number one Lindsay Davenport angrily accused reporters of taking out of context comments she made after losing to Mauresmo in a thrilling semifinal on Thursday.

Davenport said after that match that 19-year-old Mauresmo hit the ball so

hard at times she "thought I was playing a guy."

"Unfortunately you guys love to write, you know, the worst line possible and unfortunately you have probably hurt a very nice girl," Davenport told a news conference after she and Natasha Zvereva were beaten by Hingis and Anna Kournikova in the women's doubles final.

Mauresmo's camp expressed surprise at the comments by Hingis and Davenport as the World No. 29 prepared for her first grand slam final.

"She thought everyone would talk about her tennis and not her private life," coach Christophe Fourmerie, told Channel Seven television. "That is a bit surpris-

ing for her because she's young." There was no room for doubt about Kafelnikov's performance, the Russian starting strongly against a tentative Haas and gaining important early service breaks in the first two sets.

Haas had never before made it past the third round in a grand slam tournament. He began nervously and the match was almost over by the time he began to find his range with damaging groundstrokes in the third set.

Kafelnikov completely outplayed Haas, breaking the baseliner's serve in the 11th game of the final set and then calmly serving out the match to love.

He varied his tactics con-

stantly, slamming 16 aces and also drawing Haas into long rallies.

Kafelnikov said he would need to adopt similar tactics against Enqvist, who beat unseeded Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador 6-3 7-5 6-1 in the first semifinal on Thursday.

"The one thing I do have to do to stay in the match with Thomas is to hold my serve," Kafelnikov said. "I know if I stay in the match with him I will have my chances." Friday's semifinal was played with Melbourne Park's retractable centre court roof closed after light rain fell, a decision that did not please Kafelnikov.

"I was actually disappointed with the decision because Tommy beat me

once indoors," he said.

His win buried the prospect of the first unseeded men's singles final in more than 30 years of Open tennis.

Richard Krajicek beat MaliVai Washington in what was originally billed as an unseeded final at Wimbledon in 1996.

But an International Tennis Federation (ITF) spokeswoman said Wimbledon officials decided after the final Krajicek was a seed, replacing Austria's Thomas Muster who had withdrawn from the tournament. ITF records were changed to reflect this.

Other than that the only unseeded final was at the 1966 U.S. National Championships

when Fred Stolle beat fellow Australian John Newcombe 4-6 12-10 6-3 6-4. Open tennis began in 1968.

Hingis and Kournikova began the day with a 7-5 6-3 win over top seeds Davenport and Zvereva in the women's doubles final.

Hingis last year became the third woman to complete a doubles grand slam, winning the Australian Open with Mirjana Lucic and the French, Wimbledon and U.S. Open with Jana Novotna.

Hingis, 18, and Kournikova, 17, had never played together before this tournament but are close friends off the court.

Kournikova was playing in her first grand slam final.

Haas anticipates a big year

MELBOURNE (R) — Tommy Haas had a taste on Friday of the limelight enjoyed by his illustrious German predecessors, Boris Becker and Michael Stich.

But he failed to match his hero, Becker, who won his first grand slam event as an unseeded player when he was 17 years old.

Tipped to be the next big German after Becker and Stich retired, 33rd ranked Haas had put on his best showing at a grand slam event by making it to the final four at Melbourne Park.

In his semifinal, the 20-year-old from Hamburg showed his lack of big match experience as he played the wrong shots on the pivotal points against 10th seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

"He will learn to know the cost of every point he faces," the Russian said of Haas.

"It's important to play the right shot at the important time of the match, and that's probably what he's missing at the moment," he said.

Haas, sporting a tan from his Florida home, showed no disappointment with his performance.

After all, he had made it to the semifinals of the year's opening grand slam, which had been thrown wide

open with the world's top two players, Pete Sampras and Marcelo Rios out because of injury.

His path through the draw was relatively easy, as the two big names who could have been in the way — fourth urth seed Carlos Moya and 13th seed Cedric Pioline — were both ousted in the first round.

He dismissed Kafelnikov's criticism, saying a player either has a feel for the right shot at the right time or not.

"I don't think you can learn that. You either have that in you or you don't," said Haas. "You just either have that luck on the right day or you don't."

After reaching the finals of a warm-up event in Auckland and the semifinals in Melbourne, he chalked up Friday's match as another lesson in what could be building up to be a good year.

"It's a great learning experience for me so far, and you must try to keep going and have a great this year," he said.

French salute rise of potential champion

PARIS (R) — France on Friday saluted the emergence of a potential new French tennis champion following Amelie Mauresmo's victory over World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport in the semifinals of the Australian Open.

French newspapers highlighted the big 19-year-old's physical power and the all-round strengths of her game as she prepared to meet Martina Hingis in Saturday's final.

"Mauresmo right up there," said the sports daily L'Equipe in a banner headline after Mauresmo had come from behind to beat Davenport 4-6 7-5 7-5 on Thursday and reach her first grand slam final.

"It seems to us that French sport has discovered a real champion," L'Equipe said in a front page editorial.

"She has all it takes to be great," it said in an inside page headline.

"Amelie Mauresmo, head and shoulders," said a headline in the sports sec-

tion of the left-wing daily Liberation, pointing to the Frenchwoman's mental and physical strengths.

"All-powerful Amelie Mauresmo," was the title of a profile on the fast rising Frenchwoman in Le Figaro.

Mauresmo, world junior champion in 1996 after victories at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, said that then she tended to win primarily on the basis of her strength.

"I soon realised that wouldn't be enough in seniors," Mauresmo told Le Figaro.

But Mauresmo still bases her improving game on her athletic build, saying she goes to the gym three times a week.

"That helps me to be the girl that stays on court longest and for my service," Mauresmo said.

Mauresmo has played Hingis twice and lost both times but the Swiss world number two had to come from

behind on both occasions last year.

The Frenchwoman reversed the final outcome on Thursday of her only previous encounter in Berlin last year with Davenport, who remarked at the power and effect of Mauresmo's serves, saying she played like a man.

"Mauresmo disturbs," said Le Parisien of the teenager whose mental strength has carried her through the difficulties of coming out as a lesbian.

Former French Davis Cup and Fed Cup captain Yannick Noah is regarded as a key figure in Mauresmo's rise over then in May.

Noah picked Mauresmo over veteran Nathalie Tauziat for the Fed Cup semifinal against Switzerland and although she did not win her matches, she was within a whisker of beating Hingis, who she also took to three sets in the second round of the U.S. Open.

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Korda wins court ruling against ITF

LONDON (AP) — Petr Korda on Friday won a court ruling against the International Tennis Federation to escape a one-year suspension over his positive test for steroids.

The ITF said it may appeal. A High Court judge ruled the ITF can't take Korda to the Court of Arbitration over his positive test for steroids at last year's Wimbledon championships.

Korda tested positive for nandrolone after his quarterfinal Wimbledon loss to Tim Henman in July.

Last month, an independent appeal

committee appointed by the ITF said Korda was guilty of a doping offense. But the panel cited "exceptional circumstances" and said Korda should not be banned because he did not know how the banned drug got into his system.

Under pressure from players and sports organisations, the ITF appealed against the decision.

The ITF wanted to enforce the ban by appealing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland, and Korda, who, under ITF rules, faced a one-year ban for using steroids, took legal action to stop

them.

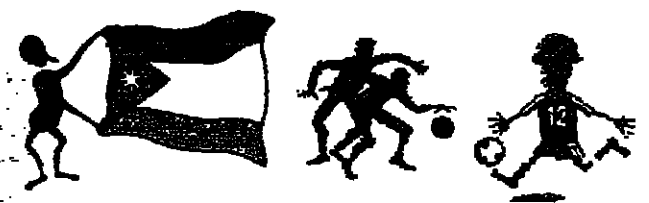
Korda's attorney, Charles Flint, said the ITF, under its own anti-doping programme, had no right in law to appeal against the decision, which was "final and binding" on both sides.

Flint said the ITF's own anti-doping programme "is designed to provide for speedy and final determination of disputes as to allegations of doping before an independent expert committee."

In Korda's case, he said, the code worked exactly as it was supposed to do.

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	Bruce Willis .. in	Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in	Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in	Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Mel Gibson .. in	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria One of Walt Disney's best movies	ILHAQ YA TARAWNEH Hisham Yanes & Amal Al Dabbas
	MERCURY RISING Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30	ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30	SAKEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	LETHAL WEAPON 4 Shows: 3:00, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	MULAN Shows: 3:00, 5:00, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.



LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

JBF cancel participation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Basketball Federation said it is not participating in the Arab Clubs' Championship, which will be held in Lebanon March 1-15, 1999. In its recent meeting, the JBF approved the Jazirah, Wihdat, Orthodoxi, Hussein and Jalil teams to take part in the Under-20 championship. The federation decided to contact its counterparts in West Asia as part of preparations for the Club Qualifiers Championship, to be held here in April. The JBF submitted a congratulatory cable to HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on the occasion of appointing him as heir.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

New York teen killed over basketball game

NEW YORK (R) — A 14-year-old boy was beaten and stabbed to death in an argument over his scoring the most points in a New York school basketball game in which his sister was the official scorekeeper, police said on Thursday. Police said Michael Bennett died in a fight between two rival groups of teen Jackie Robinson Junior High School in Brooklyn after the game on Wednesday night. About six teenagers were arrested for disorderly conduct, but no charges had been filed in Bennett's death, police said. They said Bennett was hit on the head and stabbed in the chest with a sharp object. Detectives believe some rival players were angry over an incident during the game in which Bennett was the high scorer and official scorekeeper. Bennett was playing for Walt Whitman Junior High School, although police said he was not a student there.

Jordan said wasn't coming back in June—Bulls owner

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago Bulls chairman Jerry Reinsdorf says Michael Jordan told him in June he had no intention of returning for another season. In an interview on Thursday's Chicago Tribune, Reinsdorf said Jordan told him he would not be back shortly after the Bulls beat the Utah Jazz for their sixth NBA championship. "Michael never said anything to me other than, 'I'm done playing. This is it,'" Reinsdorf said. Jordan announced his retirement Jan. 13. He also retired in 1993 to pursue a baseball career, but returned to the NBA in 1995. Reinsdorf said he chatted with Jordan on the plane ride back to Chicago after the championship. "He said he never was so tired in his life. He said it was his hardest year and he felt he had to carry the team in the Finals more than he'd ever had," Reinsdorf said. "He was totally exhausted, mentally and physically." The two had another conversation at Jordan's downtown office. "When I talked to him (in late June), he said if he did come back, he thought we could have won again. But he said he wasn't coming back," Reinsdorf said. The Bulls boss said he heard talk from others that maybe Jordan would return for a shortened season, but he never got a sense Jordan was wavering from his original statement. "Michael called me Monday (before his Wednesday retirement news conference) and said nothing had changed," Reinsdorf said. "I asked if he wanted a ceremony to retire his number again. He said, 'No more ceremonies. Just put it back up.' He said that was it."

Weah voted African player of century

PARIS (R) — AC Milan's Liberian striker George Weah, formerly of Monaco and Paris St Germain, has been voted African Player of the Century. The vote by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) put Cameroon's Roger Milla, who played in the 1982 and 1990 World Cup finals, second. Former Olympique Marseille winger Abedi Pele of Ghana was third and Algerians Lakhdar Belloumi and Rabah Madjer fourth and fifth respectively.

Davis gives Super Bowl edge to Broncos

MIAMI (R) — Two words account for Denver being 7-1/2-point Super Bowl favorites against an Atlanta team with an identical 16-2 record — Terrell Davis.

The National Football League's Most Valuable Player is every defensive coordinator's nightmare or a dream come true if he happens to be on your team.

"He's a great athlete, he's a great runner, he's got great instincts. He's got everything you look for in a great runner," Denver coach Mike Shanahan said on Thursday.

"I don't know that you can stop him," admitted Falcons coach Dan Reeves. "Hopefully we can contain him. We've got to put a lot of people on him because he breaks too many tackles."

The explosive Broncos running back, who compiled 157 yards rushing and a Super Bowl-record three touchdowns in last year's upset of Green Bay, is the primary reason quarterback John Elway finally got his championship ring. He may well be the reason Elway leaves the game after 16 seasons with two.

"He makes my job easy," says Elway, who spends much of his working life these days handing the ball to Davis and getting out of the way.

That Davis is the finest running back in the NFL today is undeniable. And Elway's claim that he may be the best of all time might not just be hyperbole.

New York Jets coach Bill Parcells compared Davis to the toughest backs to stop in NFL history — and that was before he galloped for 167 yards against the Jets in the AFC title game.

The previous week against Miami he piled up 199 yards.

Davis's ability to read a defense, find a seam and burst through is amazing, and the stunning quickness with which he can change directions and cut back leaves would-be tacklers grabbing at air.



Daniel Adams of Davis, Florida peeks through the shoulder pads of a Denver Broncos uniform as the NFL Experience opens beside Pro Player Stadium in Miami January 28. The event allows fans to experience first hand the tools and history of the NFL. The Broncos will face the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl XXXII Jan. 31 (Reuters photo)

only quarterbacks Bart Starr and Terry Bradshaw as its members.

Atlanta quarterback Chris Chandler figures the best strategy is to just keep Davis off the field.

"The longer we can hold onto the ball, the less touches he's going to get," said Chandler. "We've got to try to hold onto the rock and not let him have it." For all

his accomplishments, Davis appears to be one of the most unassuming professional athletes in sports today.

"Terrell Davis is the humblest guy I know and with all the success that he's enjoyed in his first four years in the league... I just can't believe how humble this guy is," said teammate Shannon Sharpe, a leading

candidate for least humble. Still Davis quietly has his eye on his place in football history.

"While I'm here and have some opportunities to do some great things, I'm trying to do everything I can," Davis said.

"Once I hang up my cleats I want to turn on one of those classic (TV) channels and see me running."

Former city councilman talks to FBI about Olympic cash

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Former City Councilman Tom Godfrey has told the FBI his tale of the nervous Salt Lake Olympics official with the large bag of cash.

Godfrey told FBI agents Wednesday night what he had told reporters earlier in the week: A bid committee staff member's story of carrying \$50,000 in cash to Budapest, Hungary, in 1995 just before the 2002 Winter Games were awarded.

He said Thursday he promised the FBI agents he would not disclose what he told them.

But he did recount the conversation he said occurred in the summer of 1996, when he and the man were reminiscing about what they had been doing the year before.

Godfrey, who was a councilman at the time and traveled to Budapest, has declined to name the man.

"He was saying that his trip to Budapest was a bit uncomfortable because he had to carry \$50,000 in cash. So it wasn't a pleasant flight for him," Godfrey said. "He didn't say what it was for. He said he gave it to another staff member for expenses and that was it."

Godfrey said he didn't press the man for details, but after revelations that Salt Lake's bid committee lavishly courted International Olympic Committee members before the IOC vote, the information seemed more interesting, he said.

Besides the Justice Department, an ethics panel for the Salt Lake Organising Committee and the United States Olympic Committee are investigating the extravagant payments, gifts, free medical care and scholarships for IOC relatives.

The IOC during the weekend said its investigation had found Salt Lake's bid committee spent more than \$800,000, including cash payments, on 14 specific IOC members.

In other developments Thursday: —The Justice Department has issued subpoenas to the University of Utah. Brigham Young University, Utah Valley State

College and Intermountain Health Care for information on IOC officials and relatives who attended the schools or were given medical care by IHC.

Two children of IOC members previously were identified as attending Utah schools. Swaziland IOC member David Sibande's son, Sibon, reportedly received bachelor's and master's degrees from Utah.

Libyan IOC member Bashir Attarabulsi's son, Suhel, said he attended BYU and UVSC. He said Olympic organizers paid his tuition bills and provided him with \$700 each month for living expenses.

Two proprietors of a defunct Salt Lake escort service were quoted by The Salt Lake Tribune as saying their escorts entertained IOC members at downtown hotels while they were visiting in the spring of 1995.

George and Milena Georgiev, who opened Snow White Escort Services in 1993, said two escorts performed stripteases for IOC

officials. They could not say who arranged or paid for the escorts.

It's long been rumored that escorts were provided to IOC members, but officials said there never was any confirmation.

KTVX two weeks ago quoted unidentified sources it said were close to SLOC and the escort industry as saying IOC members asked SLOC staffers both in Salt Lake City and at IOC meetings overseas to arrange escorts and the SLOC leaders were flabbergasted at the much higher cost overseas.

Tom Schaffer, attorney for former bid committee and SLOC leader Tom Welch, quoted his client as saying he knew nothing of escorts being provided.

—USA Today said Welch and IOC member Jean-Claude Ganga of the Republic of Congo shared

a bank account. Schaffer said Welch's name was on the account so Welch could procure funds for him from the account in the event Ganga was out of the country. He said Welch said he never made a deposit or withdrawal from the account.

An IOC report said Ganga received \$216,000 in gifts and payments from Salt Lake organizers. He is among those facing ouster from the IOC.

—Utah Senate President Lorne Beattie echoed earlier comments made by Gov. Mike Leavitt that the state has a "moral obligation" stand behind its agreement to indemnify Salt Lake City against any financial losses related to the games.

House Speaker Marty Stephens said it would be impossible for the Legislature to demand more oversight to make sure the

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Re-Tender Notice

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Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply, installation, full commissioning, and training for a Phone Exchange System. The new solution to be procured by the Jordan Securities Commission will be installed at the new premises (Hamzeh Building) encompassing Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) and Securities Depository Centre (SDC).

The detailed tender document identifying the requirements and specifications is available immediately for a non-refundable amount of thirty (30) Jordanian Dinars at the following address:

Administration and Financial Department
Amman Financial Market
Housing Bank Complex, Sixth Floor
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Tel.: 560-7171

The last date for submission of proposals is 12 noon, Sunday, February 7th, 1999. Proposal is to be submitted to Administration and Finance Department, Amman Financial Market.

This notice forms an integral part of the Tender Documents.

Grants Solicitation

The AMIR Program, a four-year economic opportunities activity funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is soliciting proposals for grants from private membership-based business association, societies and/or organizations and from business-oriented, professional organizations. Grant monies may be used to pay a portion of the expenses related to the grantee's activities in the following categories:

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- training courses, including trainers, course materials, site costs, etc.

To obtain instructions on how to apply, interested organization may contact the AMIR Program's Business Associations Component Leader in Amman by fax at 560-3599

Please include the name of the person in your organization who will be involved with the grant as well as your telephone and fax numbers. Thank you.

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